Sunday, February 1, 2009 • Vol. 24 / No. 55 • inquirer.net

• Why Manny matters • Meet Posh-quiao, Pacman's light fantastic side • Why women box / SUNDAY INQUIRER MAGAZINE
• Filipino debutante Paloma Urquija Zobel is first one from Southeast Asia to make it to Old World Paris ball • Lifestyle's do's, dont's for high-enders in era of economic mess / SUNDAY LIFESTYLE • Bishop who denied the Holocaust apologizes to Pope / WORLD

PHILIPPINE Sunday INQUIRER
BALANCED [illegible] FEARLESS VIEWS

• MILF frowns at amending ARMM law / NEWS

ARCHITECTURE OF FAITH The largest Muslim center of worship or masjid is now rising on a seaside village in Cotabato City. Due to be completed in October, its construction on a 5-ha land donated by Rep. Datagon Dilangalen is funded by Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei and will be named after him. The masjid is also a reaffirmation and celebration of the 25-year relationship between the Philippines and the Sultanate of Brunei that brought His Majesty here on a three-day visit that ended yesterday. Aside from the mosque, sports and education facilities will complete the complex. Its grand features are the 16 gold-painted domes and four minarets rising 48 meters or 15-story high. KOJI FURUKAWA ASSOCIATES

Kampi softens on merger

GMA party forms panel for unity talks with Lakas

By TJ Burgonio and Leila B. Salaverria

AFTER EXPRESSING INITIAL QUALMS, THE PRESIDENT of the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi) has agreed to name the party members who will engage in merger talks with Lakas-CMD.

Committee Bar Rep. Luis Villafuerte has committed to appoint four representatives to the national consolidation and unification committee, according to Gabriel Claudio, the committee chair and President Macapagal-Arroyo's political adviser.

"That's an indication that [Kampi is] ready to sit down and talk," Claudio said yesterday in a phone interview. "This [merger] is not a mission impossible."

Only on Friday, Villafuerte said a "gianormous problem" would make the Lakas-Kampi merger ordered by Mrs Arroyo a difficult task.

"How can you settle an irresistible force and an immovable object?" he had said of the two administration parties.

But Prospero Pichay, the spokesperson of Lakas and its vice president for Mindanao, yesterday shrugged off Villafuerte's contrary stance.

"He's an astute negotiator," Pichay said of Villafuerte. "He wants an equitable merger with Lakas. It's the

KAMPI A6

Kidnappers told: Join coop to get 'ransom' of livelihood

By Julie Alipala
in Zamboanga City
and Leila B. Salaverria
in Manila

ZAMBOANGA CITY—THE KIDNAPPERS of three workers of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have to organize themselves into a cooperative before they can be granted livelihood assistance and development programs, Sulu Gov. Abdusakur Tan said yesterday.

"We are willing to give them what they want, such as livelihood assistance, but they should be organized," Tan told the Inquirer by phone. "They should form a cooperative and then have it registered. They should also attend training [sessions] and seminars after doing that."

This was a turnaround from the governor's earlier tough stance, when he described the kidnappers' request for livelihood assistance as "equal to, or even more than, a ransom demand."

Last week, Sulu Vice Gov. Nur Ayesa Sahidulla said the kidnappers of Andreas Notter of Switzerland, Eugenio Vagni of Italy and Mary Jean Lacaba of the Philippines wanted livelihood assistance, and not money, in exchange for the captives' freedom.

Sahidulla visited the captives and spoke with the kidnappers in an undisclosed area in Indanan, Sulu, on Wednesday afternoon.

In Manila, Sen. Richard Gordon,

KIDNAPPERS A2

Sultan Bolkiah's mosque to rise in Cotabato

By Alcuin Papa
and Nash B. Maulana
Inquirer Mindanao

MORE THAN STATE RECEPTIONS and dinner toasts, a cultural complex rising in a serene waterfront site in Cotabato City showcases the 25-year relationship between the Philippines and the Sultanate of Brunei that brought Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah on a three-day state visit here this week.

The Sultan, who left the country yesterday, is funding the construction of what will be the biggest Muslim place of worship in the country at a cost of $48 million.

The Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah Masjid (Muslim center of worship), located in the seaside village of Inuwan, occupies 1.7 hectares of a 5-ha cultural complex that when completed will also include education and sport facilities.

With its shimmering gold-plated domes and tall, slender minarets reaching up to the sky, the mosque symbolizes the very best expression of the Muslim faith in the country and the aspirations of a long-neglected region, said the designer, architect Felino Palafox Jr.

"Our inspiration is our own aspiration for interfaith unity in the country and our Muslim brothers. We hope that the masjid will stimulate economic

SULTAN A4

RP youngster wins in Aussie Open

By Marc Anthony Reyes

FROM DUSTY BACK LOTS OF CAGAYAN DE Oro City to the hallowed grounds of the Margaret Court Arena in Melbourne, Australia, Filipino tennis sensation Francis Casey Alcantara has gone a long way.

Yesterday, the once scrawny 16-year-old who had to bulk up over the holidays became the first Filipino to win a Grand Slam event after pairing with a Taiwanese for the boys doubles title of the Australian Open tennis championships.

Alcantara, known to friends as Niño, paired with 17-year-old Cheng-Peng Hsieh to demolish Mikhail Biryukov of Russia and Yasutaka Uchiyama of Japan, 6-4, 6-2, in the final match to achieve what no Filipino has done before. En route to the championship, the duo did not drop a single set and only twice did they have to play a tiebreak.

"I don't know what to say. I'm very happy. I guess it still has to sink in," Alcantara, the Philippines' top-ranked junior player and No. 20 in the world, told the Inquirer over the phone from the bus back to his hotel.

Filipino youngster Felix Barrientos

BY YOUNGSTER A7

FRANCIS CASEY ALCANTARA winds a mean backhand, displaying the form that won for him and his partner Hsieh the Australian Open boys doubles title.

Lotto offers big hopes in hard times

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

HOW WILL FILIPINOS GET THROUGH hard times? They will buy more lotto tickets.

As mass layoffs rise due to the global economic crisis, the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) has recorded its biggest earnings in 2008.

PCSO officials expect Filipinos to continue to play lotto despite the huge odds against winning.

The PCSO is mandated to conduct

LOTTO A4

Expression of regret

DUE REPORTER FE ZAMORA EXpressed her regret in offending the feelings of the Iglesia leadership when she wrote in a news report on Aug. 23, 2003 that Sen. Gregorio Honasan stayed at an alleged "Felagson" room in the Iglesia ni Cristo Central Office. Senator Honasan was at the time being sought by authorities in connection with the so-called Oakwood Mutiny. Zamora also admitted that she has no personal knowledge of the matters in her report and that she relied solely on intelligence sources.

World Vision: 9,000 donors sought for 9,000 school kids

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

IN A YEAR PREDICTED TO BE DIFficult because of the global economic recession, a nongovernmental group that sends thousands of children to school is urging Filipinos to give more.

The initial reaction of many people to the crisis is to save more for themselves, World Vision Philippines officer in charge Joy Alvarez said yesterday.

"But what about those who have nothing to save?" she pointed out.

This year, World Vision Philippines hopes to invite 9,000 new sponsors to help send more poor children to school.

Alvarez said the financial turmoil would be "very difficult for everybody, but more so for the poor."

Thanks to the generosity of major companies, celebrities and private individuals, the group has helped some 120,000 school children in the poorest provinces in the country.

One beneficiary is 8-year-old Justin, a Grade 1 student from Cavite. His parents are separated and his mother sells noodles to send him and his three siblings to school.

"I am happy because I have a spon-

WORLD A7

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

TODAY: Sunrise: Low cloud cover will experience mostly cloudy skies and scattered rains with thunderstorms. Low cloud cover will experience mostly cloudy skies and scattered rains with thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Southern Luzon	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Iloilo	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy	Puerto Princesa	Partly Cloudy with Rain
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy with Rain
Dumaguete	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy with Rain

E-mail: pi_mail@inquirer.com.ph Website: www.inquirer.net

EZ2 (2nd draw, 9 p.m.): 3 16

SUERTRES (2nd draw, 9 p.m.): 6 0 4

(3rd draw, 2 p.m.): 5 1 1

(4th draw, 9 p.m.): 4 1 9

SIX DIGIT (No winner today): 6 8 1 8 3 8

6/42 LUZ-VIS-MIN: 7 17 30 38 39 41 — P8,385,651.00

POWER LOTTO 6/55+1/18: 33 38 47 3 36 + 6 — P50,000,000.00

Palace: EO no preemptive strike

MILF says amended ARMM law still won't bring it to peace table

By TJ Burgonio

A RECENTLY ISSUED EXECUTIVE ORDER seeking to amend the law that created the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) was not intended to preempt whatever future peace agreement is concluded with Muslim separatist rebels, Malacañang said yesterday.

Any amendments to the ARMM law can only be made after an agreement has been forged with the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), said Undersecretary Ashod Tan of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process.

Executive Order 777 "is not in any manner intended to preempt the ongoing peace process" between the government and the MILF for the revival of the stalled peace talks, said Tan.

President Macapagal-Arroyo issued EO 777 on Jan. 19 creating a preparatory committee to amend Republic Act No. 9054, the law that expanded the ARMM into a five-province region.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita explained that the idea was to amend the law's provisions on territory, among other things, and to use this in the terms of reference in the talks with the MILF.

Tan said EO 777 would serve as a mechanism for collating the results of an ongoing review of the implementation of the 1996 peace agreement between the government and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), the main Muslim insurgency.

If an agreement is forged with the MILF, a breakaway faction of the MNLF, it will also go through the same process of proposing amendments to RA 9054 to make way for the implementation of the agreement, he explained.

The government aims to restart peace negotiations with the MILF after they collapsed last August when a provisional agreement on an expanded autonomous Muslim region was aborted amid claims of its unconstitutionality.

Malaysia has agreed to again act as facilitator of the informal talks, said Foreign Undersecretary Rafael Seguis, who chairs the government panel of negotiators.

Secretary Hermogenes Esperon, the outgoing presidential adviser on the peace process, said he believes the talks should be in full swing next month and a final agreement signed by 2010.

"When we talk about authority, its embodiment with the people, we are not only talking to the MILF level, but we are talking to the entire stakeholders of Mindanao. We are also talking to the lumad, to the Christians and all the people who have a stake in peace," said Esperon, who is to head the Presidential Management Staff.

The MILF yesterday said the President's order creating a preparatory committee to amend RA 9054 was a "misdirected effort."

Khalid Musa, the MILF deputy information chief, warned that amending the organic act that created the region, incorporating the provinces of Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Sulu, Basilan and Tawi-Tawi, would only "produce the agony and suffering in Mindanao."

He said that even if Malacañang was serious about amending the ARMM charter, the MILF still would not accept it as the basis for returning to the negotiating table.

"[We] still not settle for it because it is not negotiated, it is imposed," he said.

The peace talks hit a snag over the issue of territory when the MILF insisted that the negotiations should focus only on a memorandum of agreement on ancestral domains (MOA-AD), the provisional agreement that the Supreme Court had declared unconstitutional.

The MOA-AD proposed an expanded Muslim region under the control of the MILF to be called the Bangsamoro Juridical Entity.

Last week, Ermita said amending the ARMM charter was most feasible that including on the MOA-AD. With Jeoffrey Maitem, Inquirer Mindanao

Bolante probe shows 4 laws need amending, says Gordon

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE SENATE BLUE RIBBON COMmittee will seek amendments to four laws following the end of its inquiry on Monday into the P728-million fertilizer fund scam.

Committee chair Sen. Richard Gordon said in a statement that a preliminary report was to be issued soon on "such remedial measures to fill gaps and loopholes in at least four national laws," saying that the Senate investigation was conducted to aid of legislation.

He said the laws were the 2002 Anti-Money Laundering Act (AMLA) and its Implementing Rules and Regulations, the Secrecy of Bank Deposits Act, the Government Procurement Reform Act, and the Omnibus Election Code.

The lawmaking amendments to these laws are that individuals would no longer take undue advantage of the present weaknesses in the country's legal system. There will have to be recommended and I assure you we will file completed bills," he said.

Longer freeze

The proposed amendment to Section 10 of the AMLA (Republic Act No. 9160) would seek to lengthen the period extending a freeze order on bank accounts from six months, as provided by a Supreme Court mandate, to up to two years, he said.

He said the proposed two-year freeze period should be reviewed every six months in order to prevent grave abuse of discretion on the part of the Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC).

Gordon noted that when the six-month effectivity period of the freeze order on the accounts of former Agriculture Undersecretary Jocelyn "Joc-joc" Bolante, accused of being the architect of the alleged fertilizer fund scam, expired, the AMLC could not seek an extension.

The senator said that had the AMLC filed a civil forfeiture case against Bolante, the bank account would not have been on-frozen and the latter would not have been able to withdraw funds from it.

Additional funds

The measure to amend the AMLC rules would provide it with additional funds to allow it to beef up its present personnel and invest on more with more speed, he said.

Gordon said he would file another bill to amend Section 2 of RA 1405, the Secrecy of Bank Deposits Act.

The proposal will seek to have former and current public officials and employees voluntarily allow the examination of all their local bank accounts that are the subject of an investigation.

Strict secrecy rule

This refers specifically to those charged before the courts with violation of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act, or whose account had been frozen under RA 9160 as amended by RA 9194, also known as the Anti-Money Laundering Act.

The senator pointed out that during its hearings, the blue ribbon committee was restrained from scrutinizing Bolante's bank accounts and was not able to extract information relating to the accounts because of "the strict secrecy and inflexible confidentiality rule under the Bank Secrecy Law."

Prohibit release of funds

The third bill aims to amend Section 261 of the Omnibus Election Code of the Philippines, which currently prohibits the release of public funds 45 days before a regular election and 30 days before a special election.

Gordon said he would propose to extend the prohibition on the release of public funds for the purpose of public employment, facilities and procurement activities under the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act.

He said he would also seek to prohibit the release of funds for all local and national officials, including assistance to local government units or nongovernment organizations, except assistance for calamity or disaster, and all special projects of different departments and their agencies.

The fourth bill would seek to include private institutions, nongovernment organizations, people's organizations and foundations that receive government money under the coverage of the Procurement Act, said Gordon.

Escudero: RP needs an Obama

DAGUPAN CITY—FILIPINOS NEED A man like Barack Obama to lead the country out of economic difficulty, according to Sen. Francis Escudero, who has announced anew his intention to run for president in 2010.

"I am running for president because we need a leader who can provide solutions to the unemployment problem... who can preserve the chance of teachers for higher salaries... [and] who can address the issues on hunger and poverty," Escudero told reporters yesterday.

He said the country needed a leader with a vision similar to the first black US president's.

Escudero said he was not comparing himself to Obama, but he believes he would make a good president with the help of the people, especially the youth.

He said that age should not be an issue in the presidential race.

The senator, known as Chiz, turns 40 in October.

"They say I'm still very young in politics, the country but I believe that is not a good argument," he said.

The Constitution states the minimum age for a presidential candidate is 40 years, he said.

"So long as the person is a natural-born citizen, lives in the country is a registered voter and is able to read and write, he is qualified to run," Escudero said.

He said he was confident the Nacionalista Party-Pwersa ng Masang Pilipino (NPC) would pick him as its standard-bearer. He said he had not chosen a running mate.

Asked to comment on Sen. Loren Legarda's similar intention to run for president, Escudero said: "Of course, I respect the decision of her. Loren Legarda, but I have my team in the NPC."

Grace Poe, daughter of the late actor and presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr., also announced she was running for senator in 2010. Poe said she was moving to push her father's plans for the country. With Ayee Macaraig and Orlando Dinoy, Inquirer Mindanao

Tight Senate race seen in 2010

By Michael Lim Ubac

9 THAT RACE SWEETS THOSE who aspire for the Senate in the May 2010 elections with 12 seats up for grabs.

Since the 24-member Senate is designed to be a continuing body, half of its members step down after the previous election will continue into the next Congress. The other half is replaced or reelected every three years.

However, three seats are reserved for newcomers since only Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Sen. Rodolfo Biazon are completing their term coterminous to next year.

Nine others are reelectionistes—Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile, Senate President Pro Tempore Jinggoy Estrada, Pia Cayetano, Manuel Lapid, Ana Consuelo Madrigal, Ramon Revilla, Mar Roxas, Miriam Defensor-Santiago and Richard Gordon.

The seat of then Sen. Alfredo Lim was left vacant after he ran for mayor of Manila in 2007.

Preparing for retirement

Pimentel, who was first elected senator in 1987, is already preparing for his impending retirement from politics.

"I will continue to serve our people, write books, teach law when possible, tell stories to my grandchildren, and work until the light passes out," said the senator in a phone interview yesterday.

Besides the three seats, two more slots will be free if Roxas and Gordon seek higher office. Both have publicly made known their presidential ambitions.

Newcomers, however, will have to drag it out with former senators who "graduated" in 2007, namely, Franklin Drilon, Juan Flavier, Ramon Magsaysay Jr. and Serge Osmeña III, as well as Regie Necta and Vicente Sotto III who both lost in the 2007 senatorial race.

Win-win situation

The odds are exclusive of Senators Loren Legarda, Manuel Villar, Francis Escudero, Dioscoro Lacson and Francis Pangilinan who can run for either president or vice president if they lose, they can return in the fray any time they have an even term.

All five have barely warmed their Senate seats after winning in the 2007 polls along with Senators Edgardo Angara, Juan Miguel Zubiri, Benigno Aquino III, Gregorio Honasan and Antonio Trillanes IV.

Under the Constitution, a senator has a six-year term. A senator cannot run for more than two terms but is allowed to run to midterm elections (after three years) for higher office, with the rare privilege of returning to the Senate if he loses.

A member of the House of Representatives has a three-year term, and can seek reelection for a maximum of three consecutive terms.

$9.4-M US grant to help BIR nab tax cheats

THE UNITED STATES EMBASSY TURNED over Friday the last of a $9.4-million computerized tax information support package to help the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) improve collections and catch more tax evaders.

The Information Technology Support Package, composed of more than 500 computers and other equipment that would link the BIR's 71 district offices and 12 regional offices, completes a two-year "Threshold Program" under the US Millennium Challenge Account (MCA).

A report of a $13-million rebated assistance grant—covering the Office of the Ombudsman, Department of Finance, Bureau of Customs and BIR—aimed at helping the Philippines pass the anticorruption performance threshold for MCA development funding.

The Philippines did not pass the requirement last year and was declared ineligible for MCA funding. Government officials have vowed to try and meet the performance threshold this year.

The turnover ceremony held at the BIR National Office in Quezon City was attended by Jon Lindberg, senation director of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which oversees the threshold program, and BIR Commissioner Shiela A. Guparine-Ni.

Lindberg said that by the end of February, he expects about 87 persons at BIR office nationwide to be connected to the computerized Integrated Tax System.

"The IT support package for the BIR will help increase its tax collections, improve revenue administration, and catch tax evaders. It standardizes the procedures for tax assessment and collection across BIR offices, making tax transactions more efficient, transparent and speedy," he said.

Also for the first time, the BIR is now equipped with an automated Human Resource Information System (HRIS) that would enable the agency to manage its performances, match staffing needs with expertise and human requirements, and monitor personnel decisions and staff performance.

The US government provided hundreds of desktop computers, network cables, office and other equipment necessary to link all BIR district and regional offices to the system.

Noli wants more money for housing

WHILE THANKING CONGRESS FOR approving amendments to the charter of the Home Development Mutual Fund or Pag-Ibig Fund, Vice President Noli de Castro objected to the deletion of the provision that says the fund should "invest not less than 70 percent of its monthly fund in housing."

"Housing is one sector with a big multiplier effect on the economy. Each million invested in housing translates to 19.6.6 million in economic activity in the country."

"At this time of global financial crisis, we need to put our funds in industries that would maximize the economic and create more jobs for our people," De Castro, concurrent Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC) chair, said.

He urged Congress to restore the provision to realize the law's objective of providing Filipinos with affordable shelter.

The amendments to the Pag-IBIG charter seek to strengthen not only the fund but the entire housing sector.

De Castro noted that the draft bills approved by the two houses of Congress would restore the tax-exempt privilege of the Pag-Ibig Fund and authorize its board to set the contribution rates of members, which would result in additional funds for the benefit of the Pag-Ibig members themselves.

De Castro said he is the extension of the provision was consistent with his recent announcement that Pag-Ibig was contributing at least P62 billion to the economic stimulus package being worked out by the Aquino administration.

Of the amount, 70 percent or P37.4 billion would be invested in housing.

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'Abus destroying our name'

By Desiree Caluza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

MAGUINDANAO, Philippines—Datu Unsay Mayor Samsudin Abdul Dimaukom said Muslims should publicly condemn the criminal activities of the Abu Sayyaf, which is suspected of kidnapping three members of the International Committee of the Red Cross on Jan. 15.

"I'm a Muslim and what the Abu Sayyaf did was anti-Islamic, anti-Christian and inhuman," Dimaukom said in a press forum here on Friday. "They are destroying our name."

He said the Abu Sayyaf had put Muslims in a bad light as many people tended to associate them with the bandit group.

A number of Muslim groups issued scathing statements to denounce the Abu Sayyaf's criminal activities, according to Jamasa, a lawyer and the president of the Damamayan ng Lungsod ng Marawi.

"It is time for all Muslims to speak out on this issue," he said, adding that many Muslims could be considered vile models because they were contributing to peace efforts and to nation-building.

Lawyer Khadr Guiam, secretary general of the Confederation Region Muslim Organizations, said he agreed with Dimaukom that Muslims should denounce the Abu Sayyaf's activities.

"Public condemnation ... is a must. We cannot let people outside our faith see Muslims and Islam in a negative way. The dastardly acts of the Abu Sayyaf are not the teachings of Allah," Guiam said.

Bobojim Abdullah, a leader of the Muslim community in Baguio, said non-Muslims should not "single out Muslims just about Islam to clear misconceptions.

He said the teaching of Islam to non-Muslims would result in a better appreciation of the faith.

TRAVEL EXPO
Adams EXPRESS TRAVEL

Dare to ask. Be an Inquirer.

Kidnappers told: Join coop...

Front page, A1

the chair of the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) yesterday and he was not pleased with Sakiluddin's action.

"It gave undue publicity to the kidnappers. It put our people in a very very submissive [situation]. And, as if they are victims ... I don't want the world to look at them as victims. There are very brave people," he said.

Gordon said that Sakiluddin, as a member of the PNRC in Sulu, should have advised him of her plan to visit the captives, who were taken by a group of gunmen in Patikul, Sulu, on Jan. 15.

"I want coordinated visits," he said, adding that the wire gesture not could have ended up kidnapped as well.

Gordon also said there was still no reason demand for the captives' release.

'Clearance'

Governor Tan's statement that the kidnappers' request was equal to a ransom demand was heard in a voice recording provided by the Task Force IGRC shortly after Sakiluddin's visit.

But yesterday Tan said the provincial government was ready to give the kidnappers what they wanted as long as they followed regulations.

"And they should also be firm on what type of livelihood would really help them," the governor said.

Tan also made a turnaround from his previous statements that he did not know Sakiluddin was going to see the captives.

"She had clearance to meet the kidnappers and I have knowledge of her activities," Tan said yesterday.

He said Task Force IGRC could plan its next moves because of Sakiluddin's efforts, "which proved to be helpful."

On Friday, Task Force IGRC spokesperson Sulpicio Abdulla stopped short of saying that Tan was angered by Sakiluddin's action.

Tan also waved that Sakiluddin broke the new blackout imposed on the kidnapping when she spoke with reporters after her visit to the captives.

Speaking at the Kapihan sa Sulo forum, Gordon called on the government to let the PNRC send its own people to the area where Notter, Vigan and Lacaba are said to be held.

He said this would give the PNRC an idea of what to do.

'Process not moving'

"I would like to appeal to the government to allow the Red Cross to send our own people who are known to the kidnappers. Why? So that we would know what needs to be done. Up to now we don't know what it is. The government is saying we don't go there. The process is not moving. The process should move," he said.

Gordon said he was not sure if the group that seized the Red Cross workers was the same one holding them now.

"The workers holding them speak good English," he observed.

Gordon said he had received, but refused, the kidnappers' invitation to see them: "I told us, 'You want to talk to me, talk to me in a neutral place.'"

He said he had proposed that the kidnappers' representative be picked up by police so that discussions could take place in the air.

Medicines

Gordon said he had been in touch with the Red Cross workers since Sunday, and that they seemed all right.

He said their families, as well as the Geneva-based ICRC, were getting very worried about their condition.

Sakiluddin had claimed that medicines were not for Vigat, who was suffering from hypertension, and books for all three captives.

Tan, however, denied this, saying coordination was required for such actions: "Ala, dapat mag-coordinate muna sila. Unless sabi wanted to deliver the books and medicines. Sabi nga ni doc, since this sending of medicines and books in Task Force IGRC, Bisdak lang [pulaki] yan, pero di pa mga Nostringer nyan (It's easy to send the stuff, but it should be discussed first)."

The governor also expressed disappointment in her: the PNRC and its own people in the area where Notter, Vigan and Lacaba are said to be held.

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'Process not moving'

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MAYNILAD is upgrading its pipe network in Manila as part of its continuous effort to improve water service in the West Zone.
Duration: February 3, 2009 (TUESDAY) until February 4, 2009 (WEDNESDAY) 9:00 PM 1:00 PM
Activities:
1. Interconnection of 300-mm mainline along Dagupan St. to 300-mm mainline along Tayuman, Manila
2. Interconnection of 300-mm mainline to existing 400-mm mainline along Asuncion corner Rizal Ave., Manila
THESE PROJECTS WILL RESULT IN A TEMPORARY WATER SERVICE INTERRUPTION IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:
Samples:
1. Area bounded by Rizal Ave., Asuncion, Aguinaldo, and P. Margal
2. Area bounded by Lam-Lam, Aguinaldo, Asuncion and Blumentritt
3. Area bounded by Rizal Ave. from Asuncion to R. Papa and lateral streets
Tondo:
1. Area bounded by Tayuman from J. Luna to J. Abad Santos, along Abad Santos from Tayuman to Antipolo, along Antipolo from Abad Santos to Mithiya, and along G. Fernando from Mithiya to Tayuman (including Old Tondo, Affected streets are Epifanio dos, Kalentong, G. Fernando, Dagupan St., Mithiya, Antipolo, Barangay, and others inside the bounded area)
2. Area bounded by Abad Santos from Hermosa to Antipolo, along New Antipolo from Soho to Rizal Ave., Rizal Ave. from New Antipolo to Cavite, along Cavite from Rizal Ave. to J. Abad Santos, and along Soho from New Antipolo to Rizal Ave.
MAYNILAD IS ADVISING CUSTOMERS IN THESE AREAS TO STORE ENOUGH WATER FOR THE DURATION OF THE WATER SERVICE INTERRUPTION.
For any concerns, call the Maynilad Hotline 1626

Lotto offers big hopes...

Front page, A1

charity sweepstakes, races and lotteries. Its main products are the sweepstakes, the six-digit lotto, the small-town lottery and its biggest draws, the online lotto.

From 1995 to 2008, PCSO earned a total of P146.66 billion with sales increasing an average of 14.92 percent or P1.47 billion a year.

PCSO Chair Sergio Valencia reported a steady increase in sales from 2001 to 2008.

Optimism, hope

Significantly, the sales figure doubled from 2004 to 2008. In 2008, we raised some P22.04 billion in sales out of which P2.5 billion in taxes had been paid," he said during the PCSO's 75th anniversary rites last week.

PCSO officials do not foresee the trend reversing this year.

"Last year, there was already a crisis but our earnings were higher than the target of P22 billion," said PCSO vice chair and general manager Rosario Uriarte.

"So far it's not declining, it's even going up," she added.

The PCSO earned P18.7 billion in 2007.

Uriarte attributed the consistent percentage of the lotto games despite hard times to the inveterate optimism of Filipinos.

"We need hope. This means them or buy even one ticket of sweepstakes or lotto every day. So that every day they will have some kind of hope," she said.

Last year, the widely popular lotto contributed more than P28 billion to PCSO coffers.

Since it took off in 1995, lotto has produced 1,332 millionaires who were lucky enough to guess the winning number of the six-pick number games.

The small town lottery, meanwhile, gives out more than P2 billion in just a little more than a year in operations.

"We are bracing for the impact of the economic crisis[, but we're] hoping we won't be affected. What we can assure you is we will maximize every penny we make," Valencia said.

Free pacemakers

He said the PCSO, in a tie-up with Rotary Club of Manila-Bay and the Philippine Heart Rhythm Foundation, was able to access an unlimited supply of free pacemakers through a three-year subscription to Heart Beat International.

Now on its third year of implementation, 300 indigent patients have been provided with free pacemakers that cost P800,000 each.

As the economic crisis deepens, it will become harder for people to get medical care.

Uriarte said he hopes Filipinos will continue to play lotto to help fund the government's charity projects. "Right now, charity is a dole out. But here it's not a dole out, because the money comes from lottery who are given hope in exchange."

Where the money goes

Under the law, PCSO's earnings are split three ways—30 percent for the prize money, 35 percent for the operating funds and 35 percent for charity.

The PCSO charity fund is spent on medical and dental missions, medical assistance and upgrade of hospitals, health centers, treatment centers, private health institutions and some NGOs.

It also provides medical assistance through guarantee letters to hospitals and health facilities. Nearly half of the fund's income receive assistance for payment of their hospitalization expenses, followed by beneficiaries who need dialysis and chemotherapy.

PCSO also donates to charitable institutions that take care of abandoned or abused children and youth, the elderly and the handicapped.

It is also mandated by several laws to contribute more than P6 billion of its earnings to government agencies for various purposes.

NBI raiders find 2,100 LPG tanks in warehouse

By Erika Sauler

AGENTS OF THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF Investigation yesterday seized more than 2,100 branded liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) tanks in a raid on a warehouse in Manila.

The raid was staged a day after Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez ordered the NBI to go after hoarders and price manipulators of cooking gas. Gonzalez issued the order following reports that huge hoards had been finding it more difficult to look for LPG since the beginning of the year.

The NBI antifraud and computer crimes division, together with a representative from the Department of Energy, conducted the raid on Friday night at 1237 Benavidez St. in San Cayo, Manila, acting on a tip from concerned citizens.

NBI Director Ireneo Maceda Jr. said William Chua, owner of Primex Enterprises, faces charges of hoarding, illegal trading and overpricing of petroleum products in violation of Batas Pambansa Blg. 33.

"It was initially a surveillance operation which turned into a raid. We became suspicious upon interviewing residents of the area who said there were buyers who left empty-handed when in fact there were stocks of LPG tanks inside," NPCCB Director Vicente de Guzman III told the Inquirer yesterday.

NBI agents who searched the warehouse from 4 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. noted that there buyers of LPG were turned away. But those given the cooking gas were made to pay P500 for an 11-kg cylinder, according to receipts found by the NBI during inspection.

De Guzman said the prevailing market price of LPG ranges from P480 to P800.

Authorization sought

NBI agents asked Alexander Yapchiong, executive assistant of Energy Undersecretary Roy Kinoshita, at 9 p.m. to authorize a raid, which was subsequently conducted until 11 p.m. De Guzman said the energy department had the power to inspect the premises of petroleum distributors.

De Guzman said Chua admitted he was not a licensed refiller of gas tanks but agents discovered an improvised refilling station in the warehouse.

"We found out, too, that they only had a permit to sell. Tondilan but they also had Gasul, Shellane and Superbutane, among other brands," De Guzman said.

Liquigaz hikes LPG price by ₱4/kg

By Amy R. Nueva

LIQUIGAZ PHILIPPINES CORP. increased the price of its liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) by P4 a kilogram effective midnight last night, saying it anticipated an increase in the international contract price of cooking gas.

The latest price hike translates to a jump of P44 in the price of an 11-kilogram LPG cylinder.

Prior to this latest increase, Energy Secretary Angelo T. Reyes had said that an LPG tank should sell for between P478 and P480. However, some dealers were reported selling LPG at over P500 a cylinder as early as last month.

Liquigaz senior marketing manager Jun Galingay said all firms were anticipating this month an increase of $80-$180 a metric ton (MT) in the international contract price of LPG, which would roughly translate to a P4-P5 per kilogram increase in the retail price.

In January, the contract price was $580 per MT.

On Thursday, major oil player Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. had a price hike by increasing its Shellane LPG price by P4 a kilogram.

Higher acquisition cost

Shell explained the increase was due to the higher acquisition cost of the Lamar LPG imports.

Shell had to pay more for the latest cargo of about 9,000 MT, since it had to advance its February LPG imports last month to address the tight supply. The price of the latest imports was based on an estimated higher February international contract price.

Big 3 should cut prices

The militant transport group Pinagbuklod ng Tsuper at Operator Nationwide (Piston) yesterday demanded that oil companies slash prices of petroleum products anew, saying that global crude oil prices had slumped further to $33.80 a barrel.

Piston secretary general George San Mateo said the government should immediately move to require the "Big 3" oil companies—Shell, Petron and Caltex—to cut diesel fuel and gasoline prices to as low as P22 a liter.

Government responsibility

He said it was unjust of the Big 3 to keep diesel prices at an average of P33 a liter, as global crude oil prices continued to go down.

San Mateo added that prices of liquefied petroleum gas should also be slashed to P480 per 11-kilogram cylinder.

He said the government should take it upon itself to resolve the issues of the tight LPG supply and the continuous increase in gasoline prices, instead of passing the responsibility on to the DOE.

Perjury raps filed against 'Harvard man'

By Julie M. Aurelio

POLICE FILED PERJURY CHARGES TODAY against a man who pretended to be a Harvard University law student who was robbed by a taxi driver in Quezon City.

Chief Insp. Darius Figueroa of the Quezon City Police District filed charges of false testimony and using a fictitious name against Richard Sangalang, 24, at the city prosecutor's office.

Sangalang, of Capas, Tarlac, had claimed to be a Filipino-American from Beverly Hills, California, who was studying at Harvard and who came to the country to attend a relative's wedding in Angeles City.

He claimed he had a taxi driven by Hospicio Gallardo in the Ninoy Aquino International Airport but instead of taking him to the nearest bus station like he asked, he found a bus for Baguio. Gallardo drove to Cubao, Quezon City, where he and a cohort clubbed Sangalang of his cash and valuables worth $13,000.

But police became suspicious of Sangalang, who had introduced himself as Nathan Javier Smith, when a check with the Bureau of Immigration at Ninoy did not turn up the name Smith among recent arrivals in the country.

Supt. Franklin Mateo Widsang, chief of the QCPD Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit, said Sangalang later admitted making the whole thing up to win the politicians's sympathy and maybe some money.

Widsang said he had lent the young man P2,500 to buy a bus tickets to Baguio.

The police's suspicions were later bolstered when Sangalang could not tell them in which US state Harvard was located.

He also reportedly let slip a Filipino phrase, when he supposedly could not speak the language.

Bail for his temporary freedom has been set at P6,000, Widsang said.

18 Sino illegal workers nabbed

EIGHTEEN CHINESE NATIONALS FLEW TO Cebu recently using in the country to visit were actually workers bound for a construction project at the Cagayan Economic Zone there (Ceza).

The Bureau of Immigration yesterday apprehended the 18 after they arrived on the Xiamen Airlines flight from Laoag Airport (Pinal).

They were ordered immediately deported to Hianoa, their point of origin, by Immigration Commissioner Marcelino Libanan.

The Bilateral Compliance and Monitoring Group (MCMG) headed by Rolando Mariaella and Bernardo Aquino reported the 18 Chinese nationals arrived on Air Manila Flight XX 1953 and presented a group manifest that was found irregular.

Upon questioning through an interpreter, it came out the 18 were actually going to work in construction at the Ceza.

"From their own admission, we confirmed they were not tourists as their documents showed but workers at the construction site," Mr. Mr. McMillan said in his report to Libanan.

Libanan said illegal foreign workers would not be allowed to compete against employment-

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Sunday, February 1, 2009
4th Sunday in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Dt 18:15-20

Moses said, the Lord will raise up for you a prophet like myself from among the people, from your brothers, to whom you shall listen. Moreover this is what you asked of the Lord your God at Horeb, on the day of the Assembly, you said, "I am afraid to die and I do not want to hear the voice of Yahweh my God nor again that great fire." So Yahweh said to me: "They have spoken well. I shall raise up a prophet from their midst, one of their brothers, who will be like you. I will put my words into his mouth and he will tell them all that I command. If someone does not listen to my words when the prophet speaks on my behalf, I myself will call him to account for it. But any prophet who says in my name anything that I did not command, or speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die."

Responsorial Psalm: 1 Cor 7:32-35

I would like you to be free from anxieties. He who is not married is concerned about the things of the Lord and how to please the Lord. While he who is married is taken up with the things of the world and how to please his husband.

Gospel: Mk 1:21-28

They went into the town of Capernaum and Jesus began at once to teach the people during the Sabbath assemblies. The people were astonished at the way he taught, for he spoke as one having authority and not like the teachers of the Law.

It happened that a man with an evil spirit was in their synagogue and he shouted, "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are: You are the Holy One of God." Then Jesus spoke harshly to the evil spirit, shouting, "Be silent and come out of this man!" The evil spirit shook the man violently and, with a loud shriek, came out of him.

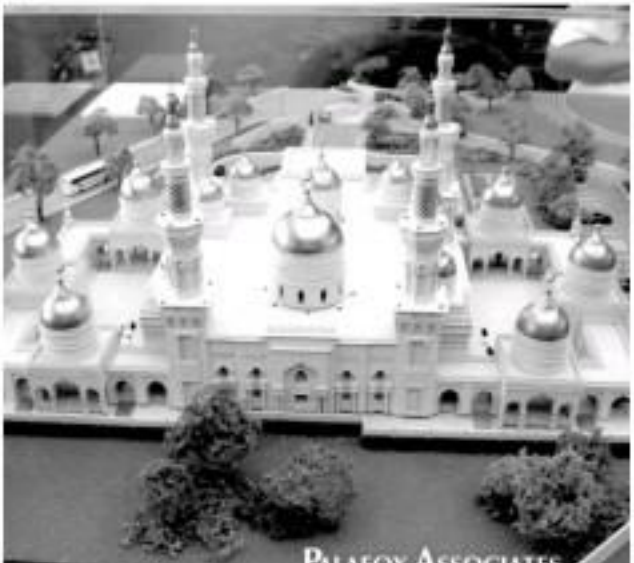
All the people were astonished and they wondered, "What is this? With what authority he preaches! He even orders evil spirits and they obey him!" And Jesus' fame spread throughout all the country of Galilee.

COMMENTARY

That the words that come from the mouth of Jesus have a powerful and lasting effect should come as no surprise. After all, Jesus is the Word of God. And as the Bible begins and the account of God creating the universe through the power of his Word, so too does this ministry from the first chapter of the Gospel of St. Mark emphasize the redemptive power of the words that come from the Lord. Jesus speaks and great things happen.

At every celebration of the Holy Eucharist the Gospel is proclaimed and we hear words of Jesus, words that contain within them the power to effect tremendous change within us. May we truly listen to Him. May we take His words to heart and allow them to drive away fear, distraction and temptation. We, newly anointed to have authority over preaching and anyone who would wish to harm. There are few better ways to prepare ourselves than to read the Scripture ever and listen to the power of the Word of God.

Claretian Communications Foundation, Inc., 4 Maginhawa St. UP Village, Diliman, Quezon City (P.O. Box 4 Central 1101 Quezon City), Tel. No. 920-1611 to 20 ext. 204 Fax No. 920-1611 Email: claretian@claretian.org.ph Website: www.claretian.org.ph Claretian Publications in the Philippines: Claretian Publications, Inc. (Manila), Claretian Publications (Cebu) Inc. (Cebu), Claretian Publications (Davao) Inc. (Davao), Claretian Publications (Iloilo) Inc. (Iloilo), Claretian Publications (Cagayan de Oro) Inc. (Cagayan de Oro



THE VIEW from the back of the mosque that speaks on. (The is just as majestic and uplifting as the facade. The mosque complex to be called Sultan Haruneal Bolkiah Masjid costs $48 million.

FELIPE PALAFOX JR. carried out the architecture, master planning and interior design of the mosque that's covered by a cultural bilateral agreement between the Sultanate of Brunei and the Philippine government.

Sultan Bolkiah's mosque to rise in Cotabato

From page A1

growth and development in Mindanao," Pelaez said in an interview.

The mosque project, which is covered by a cultural bilateral agreement between the governments of Brunei and the Philippines, is meant to showcase the unity between the Philippines and Brunei, said Palafox, who was recently in the news when he pulled out of a lucrative contract to build a casino complex in the Subic freeport to protest the cutting of more than 200 trees on the site.

Finished by October

The complex is expected to be finished in October after the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan. The architectural plans were completed early in the new year and construction started last Jan. 12.

The land was donated by the family of Maguindanao Rep. Bidgen Datangcan who enrolled the building for the project from the Sultan during the groundbreaking ceremony last Jan. 9.

Of all Datangcan's projects, "this is the best so far," said Datangcan, Maguindanao scholar and Iranian translator.

"This will certainly help in the development of a cultural center city as it will become a venue for preaching to a larger number of people," he said.

Datangcan said he would not be handling the funds donated by the Sultan. The contractor will be paid directly by Brunei.

The site can be only "facilitated legal ways" to ensure the "proper entry and utilization of the funds as intended by the donor, the royal government of Brunei."

Datangcan estate

The site is part of a 50-ha estate belonging to the Datangcan family. The congressman said he was offering a portion of the family estate to a housing project for retired local journalists. A condition of the award of the homes is that they would not be sold to a third party.

The waterfront location is well-chosen. The mosque will be visible to those arriving by sea from the Moro Gulf to the east and to those arriving by air by way of the Awang Airport to the south.

It is also prime urban land, being located within a designated expansion site for the city in the villages of Kalanganan II, Bulusan and Barangay.

According to Cotabato City Mayor Muslimin Sema, this part of the city has been earmarked for the development of a new port and an industrial zone.

The city's medium-term development plan indicates that a vast tract of land across the Dilangalen property is being eyed for commercial, industrial and housing zones in preparation for the construction of the city's first seaport.

Rejected by MNLF

A source from the Moro National Liberation Front, a backer of which is headed by Sema, said the rebel group had declined a similar offer of funding from a foreign source for the construction of a team of Iranian mosque because they set up a panel to the "silent meeting of a landmark project in Mindanao."

But what's in a name, said Datangcan. The development plans for the area was in line with Islam's concept of community building, which begins with a consideration of a mosque, he said.

"It will have its continuing impact on the people by establishing an ideal Muslim community and providing a model learning venue for young Muslims from our generation to accolades," Datangcan said.

Muslim architecture portfolio

According to Palafox, the design incorporates elements of Filipino, Asian and Islamic traditions. The designers also took into consideration such regulatory norms of Muslim worship as the direction needing to be oriented toward Mecca, the Muslims' holiest city in Saudi Arabia, and provisions for an indoor and outdoor prayer hall.

He said he has also incorporated environmental concepts in the design, maximizing natural light for efficiency and reduction of electricity and heat accumulation. There will be closed circuit television and fire protection systems.

Despite having been a student in a Catholic seminary, Palafox, who heads Palafox Associates, has compiled a formidable portfolio of work in Muslim countries like the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. In fact, he started his architectural practice in Dubai.

Of the 3-ha complex, 1.7 ha will be occupied by the mosque. The rest of the property will go to the construction of residential, Islamic schools), library, sport facilities and others.

"It will not just be a place of worship but are planned to be a community," said Palafox.

Facing Mecca

The grand feature of the mosque is the four minarets (toward rising 46 meters high, the equivalent of a 15-story building.

Inside the main center of worship are two prayer rooms separated by an eight-meter-high latticed partition. The bigger prayer hall can accommodate 1,500 worshippers while the smaller one can take 400.

An altar facing Mecca, it is noted in the very center of the mosque in front of the main prayer room.

Two spacious courtyards flank both prayer rooms. These courtyards are surrounded by arcaded hallways which accommodate pavilions their ablutions.

The whole structure is built on a podium, which is elevated two meters from the ground. The podium can be accessed on three sides, by two front stairs, four side stairs and two pedestrian ramps.

Toward unity

Besides incorporating environmental protection in his designs, Palafox said he did not want the mosque in his words from the "architecture of faith" concept.

"I am privileged to have worked on a project that could help development in Mindanao. We hope this will unite Christians, Muslims and people from other faiths and bring mutual respect for all religions," he said.

Kampi softens on merger

From page A1

right partnering."

Talks on Tuesday

Villafuerte and Speaker Prospero Nograles, the president of Lakas, are expected to submit their respective formats to the committee on Tuesday, Claudio said.

"We will sit down for talks on Tuesday to see the agenda," he said.

Claudio expressed agreement with Villafuerte's concerns, saying "Nobody said that coming in a merger of the two biggest political parties in the country was going to be easy."

He said the merger would "require a painstaking, arduous and meticulous process."

"We had such a process in 2007, when Lakas [Villafuerte] represented Kampi with outstanding gentlemen and leadership. The agreements on the table were fair, clear and decisive. It was the implementation of those agreements that broke down in many areas. Now we know better," Claudio said, referring to the 2007 midterm elections.

He said that as a national leader of "convergence and cohesiveness," Villafuerte knew that "the stakes in 2010 are high" and that "a merger is key to winning the national elections."

The merger of the two ruling parties has been on the table for over a year now, but Kampi has reluctant.

At the Thursday meeting of the Lakas executive committee, Mr Arroyo ordered the quick merger of Lakas and Kampi in order to ensure the administration's victory in 2010.

But on Friday Villafuerte spelled out the tough challenge that lay ahead, stating as an instance the squabbling among local politicians come election time.

'Start at the top'

On the phone with the Inquirer, Friday confirmed that despite the merger agreements in the Ilocos and Compostela regions, the proper approach to the merger was to "start at the top, not the local levels."

"Because even if there are agreements at the local level, when the endorsed leaders don't agree to those?" said the former representative of Siquijor del Sur. "Before we started, there should have been a joint communique that were selling to forge a merger."

According to Claudio, Lakas and Kampi can agree this early on some general principles, such as the need to support a common presidential bet and a common candidate for president.

But if all else fails, Mr Arroyo can always intervene and coax Kampi leaders, including Villafuerte, to agree to the merger.

Said Pichay: "The President has spoken. She wants the parties to merge. If she tells Kampi, they will also agree to a merger. She's our leader head. She's the chair of Lakas, and she de facto chair of Kampi."

'Para qun?'

But Palawan Rep. Antonio Alvarez of Kampi said the Presidency's intervention was the only thing that the merger had going for it.

Alvarez also said there were many obstacles to the merger, including the internal problems of his party and the disputes at the local level.

"The only good reason by the merger is the President's order. That's the only good reason I can see," he said on the phone.

Asked whether he thought the merger could be completed by 2010, Alvarez said: "At this point, honestly, I don't think it has a chance. I don't want to sound negative, but even (I don't know). I don't see a good reason. Aside from (the President's instructions), there's nothing."

Alvarez claimed that other Kampi members also did not want the party to be dominated by Lakas in a merger.

He said that if Lakas would be the dominant party, Kampi members would become second-class citizens.

"But why should we merge? I see no good reason to merge. Para qun (What for)? If you want to be recognized as a party, why merge?" he said.

Party factions

Echoing Villafuerte, Alvarez said the merger would be difficult to accomplish.

He said even Kampi members were not seeing eye to eye on certain issues.

For example, he pointed out, he had been identified with the Kampi faction headed by Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno, the other faction being led by Villafuerte.

But he refused to elaborate on the disputes within his party.

Alvarez also said local politics was another contentious issue that would pose a stumbling block to a true merger.

"That's the biggest problem. We should start from the bottom," he said.

Alvarez observed that in certain areas, Lakas and Kampi members were expected to seek the same posts.

The situation can get complicated when Lakas or Kampi members challenge their own party mates for the same seats, he said.

Battlegrounds

Cebu is among the provinces where Lakas and Kampi can get bored to head in filling up the local posts.

Five of Cebu's six districts are represented by Kampi members, but Cebu City's two districts are led by Lakas members. The representatives are expected to back their own candidates for local posts.

In 2007, Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia bolted Lakas to join Kampi.

In 2004, she defeated Lakas' Celestino Martinez for the post. In the next elections, she defeated Antonio Tupas, who was under the Partido Demokratiko Pilipino ng Pilipinas but was backed by Lakas.

The governor also fumed her own party's Osu Cebu.

Her brother, Pablo John Garcia, who represents Cebu's third district, has been quoted as saying that the governor's party decided not to align with Lakas because in 2004, Lakas endorsed candidates who were not on the Garcia slate.

La Union may also see its own clash of a Lakas-Kampi clash in 2010.

Its two congressional districts are headed by one Lakas and one Kampi representative, Victor Ortega and Eman Duquiz Jr., who are expected to back their own local candidates.

Eman Duquiz is challenged, but failed to defeat, La Union Gov. Manuel Ortega in the last elections.

Relations is another province where Lakas and Kampi candidates have clashed.

In 2007, Kampi's Amelito Mercado defeated Lakas' Rodorico Degulgamon for the governorship.

Relations in the congressional seats are held by Lakas members.

CELEBS AND THEIR PROTEGES Endorsers of World Vision and sponsors get cheques of appreciation from their wards during the launch of a new campaign to solicit more patrons. They are from left, ex-beauty queen Miriam Quiambao, actors-singers Sam Milby, Sam Concepcion and Christian Bautista, broadcaster Korina Sanchez, Nikki Gil and Philippine Idol finalist Reynaret Sajor.

World Vision: 9,000 donors sought

Pretongpage A1

ner," Javier said.

This school year, he was given a bag, a pair of shoes, a complete set of uniforms and other educational supplies. His family also received groceries last Christmas.

While public education is free, giving tots school is still costly as students need to buy school supplies.

New campaign

"God makes it accessible for us to do something good in our lives," broadcaster Korina Sanchez, a board member of World Vision Philippines, said yesterday during the launch of the new campaign to get 9,000 new sponsors for 9,000 children in 2009.

Although the group has been getting about 4,000 new sponsors annually, Alvarez stressed: "We need more."

Sponsors give P600 every month until the child finishes elementary or high school, depending on how much they are willing to give. Sponsors do not need to wait for the next school year (June) and can start their donations now.

"The campaign aims to stir the hearts of the public to look around and try to envision a better world for every child," the group said in a statement.

Meet the children

The program allows sponsors to meet the children they help and even monitor their progress.

"We send our sponsors annual reports from the schools of the students they sponsor," Alvarez said.

World Vision is a global organization operating in poor countries. It has been doing welcome work in the Philippines since 1957. It not only sends children to school, but also organizes communities and sends aid during calamities.

"Poverty is unfair for children," said Nikki Gil, television personality who endorses World Vision for free. "They are born into it. They have no choice."

Other celebrities helping World Vision are beauty queen Miriam Quiambao, singers Christian Bautista and Sam Concepcion and TV host Miriam Quiambao. They all attended yesterday's launch to show their support.

Heartfelt support

Milby, who sponsors two children in school, said he found fulfillment in helping kids reach their dreams through education. "It is a great feeling to give these children a chance in life."

He has pledged to sponsor two more kids.

According to Alvarez, it is this kind of heartfelt support from celebrities and private individuals that has inspired the group.

"Your high school students from Mandaluyong City decided to pool their money and sponsor a child," Alvarez said. "They organized fundraising activities in their school."

Sweet success

The sweetest success as he is seeing the sponsored children help others as well.

"Our hope is for our recipients to develop themselves and share [their success] with others," Alvarez said.

Some of the recipients who finished college and found work are paying it forward—they've become sponsors of children themselves.

Companies and individuals interested in sponsoring a child can call World Vision at (02) 374-7777 or visit the website at www.worldvision.org.ph.

RP youngster wins Aussie Open boys doubles title

Pretongpage A1

reached the semifinals of the Wimbledon junior singles in 1985, the year he was ranked No. 1 in the world in the junior circuit. In 1993 Gimeno won and third of Barnes' felicitations "Afghan Mist" Kemper won the Wimbledon Plate—a consolation for first- and second-round losers of the Wimbledon main singles.

Almonte's triumph drew appreciation from local and foreign-based Filipino tennis fans who swarmed the Australian Open website with a deluge of congratulatory messages.

The doubles title means Ilagan made up for his first-round upset loss to unseeded Swede Daniel Berta in the boys' singles where Almonte was seeded 18th.

New teamup

In the doubles he and Hsieh, last year's champions with a different partner, were seeded seventh as a pair. The team pair, which teamed up only this year,bowed out in the second round of the same age event, the Kimberlyann Invitational, two weeks back.

"The general plan was to be aggressive and to attack the net," said his coach Jeanjoe Toledo. "The opponents are bigger so we can't afford to play their game."

That's what the Silver-7 Almonte and the 6-foot Hsieh did as they broke their opponents right in the opening game and held serve into the first set.

Almonte said they were prepared for a tough time in the second set, but after posting a 3-1 lead, he said he could already smell the victory.

3rd Grand Slam title

The match was over in just 64 minutes in the sweltering Australian summer heat, which may further matched 43 degree Celsius and caused the quarrelled match between them and German's Kevin Krawietz and Dominik Schulz to be postponed.

It was Almonte's third Grand Slam boys doubles title. He won it when he reached 40 degree Celsius and caused the quarrelled match between them and German's Kevin Krawietz and Dominik Schulz to be postponed.

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ALCANTARA in action in last year's Mitsubishi International Tennis junior championship

singles draw.

Almonte is the oldest of three children. He learned to play tennis from his father who passed away six years ago.

"I dedicate this to him," said Almonte with whose mother Sarah, a government employee, was there cheering him at the sidelines.

Davis Cup prospect

It was also an advanced birthday gift for the young netter who will turn 17 on Feb. 4. They are scheduled to arrive home late today and return to his studies at the Ateneo University in Cagayan de Oro City where he is a high school senior.

Already, there was talk of him getting a slot in the Philippine Davis Cup training team, something Toledo welcomed.

"That's great news. I played in the Davis Cup before and I know how it will help him with his confidence," said Toledo. His stint in the Australian Open was sponsored by Cebuana Lhuillier and tennis patron Oscar Hilado.

It was complete domination for Alcantara and Hsieh, who combined to make 87 percent of their first serves against Bilyalov and Ordiyanin's 72 percent. They also passed 60 percent accuracy in second serves against their opponents' 41 percent.

Soon after Alcantara fell to Berta (3-6, 4-6) in the boys singles, his teammate Hsieh went full steam ahead, beating Toni Androic of Croatia and Stefanos Sitsipas of India (6-3, 6-1) in the first round and James Chaudry of Britain and Aldo Martinez of Ireland (6-0, 6-3) in the second round.

They also battled Krawietz and Schulz, 6-1, 7-6 (2), and booted out Australia's Maximilian Neuchrist and Thanos Samuel Skoulakoris, 7-6 (4), 6-4, in the semifinals to wage into the championship match.

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Workers say crisis action plan favors capitalists

By Krizia L. Rivera

A LABOR GROUP YESTERDAY slammed the tripartite action plan drawn up by representatives of the government, labor and employers on Friday, saying it was stacked in favor of business owners.

The Partido ng Manggagawa (PM) said the action plan fell short of helping workers.

PM said the commitments agreed upon during last week's Tripartite Action Conference on the Global Financial Crisis were "flawed" and "skewed" to benefit the capitalists.

"The action plan is heavy on reducing the cost of doing business for the capitalists but silent on lowering the cost of living for the workers. There were proposals on tax cuts for businesses but none on a tax rebate for workers," the organization said in a statement.

PM said the Department of Labor and Employment's emergency fabulous, namely, the livelihood assistance and retraining programs for workers were not enough.

Funding insufficient

The DOLE's Worker's Income Augmentation Program (WIN-AP), a small business funding mechanism for low-income families, is insufficient and funding approval takes months, the PM said.

PM said the P5,000 offered by WIN-AP was "too small" and would be consumed in a month's time on a family's basic necessities.

PM is banking for a "bailout" package composed of bigger cash subsidies for displaced workers to raise their purchasing power and spur the economy.

According to DOLE data, about 60,000 Filipino workers have been affected by the global financial crisis. DOLE and industry players predict that more workers will lose their jobs this year.

At the tripartite meeting, the government, employers and labor representatives promised to cooperate with each other to save jobs. The parties agreed to provide accurate data on unemployment and called for the facilitation of loans and grants to displaced workers.

Tax cuts, smaller fees

The business sector also called on the government to look into ways of making the business environment easier for them. They asked for tax cuts, reduced holiday pay and smaller fees for doing business.

On Friday, Labor Secretary Marianito Roque announced a P400-million DOLE fund to help the jobless. The money, he said, will be in the form of a "parol" to workers who need to build their own businesses.

He also announced that the Department of Budget and Management was extending another P300 million to DOLE for workers' financial assistance.

The labor department has urged workers to check out and register with the department's job search site, www. phil-job.net or at www.dole.gov.ph. The site aims to match workers' skills with available jobs.

The labor chief also said the department had activated a 24/7 Global Financial Crisis Hotline (527-3527) to help workers and respond to their questions.

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Delivering more than a drop.

Aurora town mayor freed, must show gun license

By Julie M. Aurelio

POLICE RELEASED LATE FRIDAY AN Aurora town mayor they had taken into custody earlier along with his aides and a bodyguard for having high-powered firearms in his vehicle in Quezon City.

Supt. Franklin Mateo Mabuting of the Quezon City Police District's Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit, said Victorio Briones, 69, and the others were released on condition they would return with the documents for the firearms.

Briones, mayor of Dilasag town in Aurora province, his aides Reinaldo Damasco and Ismael Llana, and bodyguard PO1 Allan Ulchia were taken into custody Friday afternoon.

Found in the mayor's Toyota Land Cruiser were two Armalite rifles, a 9-mm and a .45-cal. pistol. The rebels was pushed in front of a restaurant on Banawe Street.

The mayor told police the .45-cal. pistol was his and that he would return with the papers showing it was licensed.

Mabuting said only one of the Armalites and the 9-mm pistol had cover documents. The bodyguard allegedly owned the other firearm in question.

"We will give them until next week to present the documents for the firearms," Mabuting said.

"If by then they had not given us the documents, then we might charge them with illegal possession of firearms," he said.

Police said a concerned citizen alerted them to the firearms in the vehicle.

The mayor and his party did not resist arrest and explained the firearms were for the mayor's protection as he had supposedly been receiving death threats.

Sulu sultan asserts rights over Sabah

By Erika Sauler

THE SULTANATE OF SULU YESterday declared it would assert its property rights over Sabah (formerly North Borneo) regardless of the unresolved territorial dispute between the Philippines and Malaysia.

Sultan Esmail Dalun Kiram II said he had entered into an agreement with foreign companies to develop Sabah, especially its oil and gas, to press his proprietary rights.

In a speech at the Manila Pavilion Hotel in Manila, the sultan said, "I am getting old and the wait is not long and so I decided to sign a development contract with some legitimate foreign companies to develop our property."

He said he had sent copies of the contract to the Malaysian prime minister to inform him "that we mean to exercise our rights as stipulated by the British high court of Borneo (in 1939)."

Sabah was leased to the British North Borneo Co. in 1878 by the Sultanate of Sulu but it was made part of the Federation of Malaysia in 1963 after the British granted it independence.

The Philippines' pending claim to Sabah is dormant at this time but Kuala Lumpur continues to pay yearly rent to the sultan.

The sultan's son and royal consuelor, secretary, Mohda Kiram, explained that "we will exercise ownership regardless of which government owns (Sabah)."

He said there will not question (the sovereignty) issue because it is "complicated."

The younger Kiram lamented the measly $5,000 Malaysia pays in annual rent for Sabah compared to the $24-123billion stream of income the territory generates for the Malaysian government.

In the same breath, the sultan said they will tap private security agencies to maintain law and order in Sulu.

He said: "The Sultan of Sulu and North Borneo (Sabah) has decided to tap quasi-government security and peacekeeping agencies to foil any attempt of terrorist and kidnap groups to use the sultanate regions in their continued kidnap-for-ransom activities."

He added that the "lawless groups using the regions of Sulu in creating terror send a negative signal to would-be investors in the region."

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OPINION

Email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph Website: www.inquirer.net/opinion

Prospero's legacy?

EDITORIAL

AT LAST WEEK'S HOUSE HEARING ON THE FAILED Legacy banks, a Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas official was asked whether the controversial businessman-politician Cirilo de los Angeles Jr. was indeed the owner of the Legacy Group. "We are still looking into that," BSP Deputy Governor Nestor Espenilla said, cautiously, despite a BSP probe that started in 2003. And yet nobody who has placed a substantial amount of money in any of the 11 Legacy banks that closed last November is in any doubt that De los Angeles, now mayor of Sto. Domingo town in Albay, is the man behind Legacy.

Just ask House Speaker Prospero Nograles. He told reporters the other day that he had made "placements" with Legacy. "I'm still trying to recover 40 percent of my capital. I'm no friend of Cirilo de los Angeles. If I can, I would have recovered my money," he said. Nograles was trying to distance himself from allegations raised by a former president of the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. that he had coddled De los Angeles at a time when banking authorities were investigating him, but Nograles ended up doing the exact opposite.

His attempt to paint himself a victim of the Legacy collapse only reaffirmed that it was, in fact, De los Angeles who controlled Legacy. "If I am [a friend of De los Angeles], I would have recovered my money." That statement makes sense only if Nograles believed that De los Angeles was the person to recover the money from.

Nograles also told the hearing that De los Angeles often complained to him about the "harassment" he received from the BSP. "He told me that investors like Ramon Ang [president of San Miguel Corp.] were interested in buying some of his banks, [but he was being badmouthed by] regulators when [prospective buyers] go to the BSP to conduct due diligence."

This particular story may still change. When he spoke to the hearing for the Francisco special report on the Legacy mess, Nograles noted that he knew De los Angeles because of political ties. "He is a Lakas party member, and he handles our people in Albay," the Speaker said. "How could I not know him?"

But in a news conference late last week, Nograles answered that De los Angeles was not a Lakas member, after all. "But, I think he belongs to the pro-administration wing of the Liberal Party."

Nograles also debunked the high interest rates that the Legacy banks were offering investors. "[De los Angeles] explained to me why he is able to give high interest rates. It's because he's willing to do what big banks are not willing to do. It makes sense."

(Well, yes, it does, in the same way that, say, a Ponzi scheme makes sense: too inequitably, while the going is good. There, new money stops flowing in, the entire scheme collapses.)

Speaker Nograles feels badly that his name has been "dragged" into the Legacy issue. Former PDIC president Ricardo Tan has alleged that Nograles, when he was still House majority leader, asked the PDIC to go easy on De los Angeles. According to Tan, Nograles told him: "Petnic, give him what he wants. He needs it. He helped Kuhayan a lot," apparently referring to Vice President Noli de Castro's campaign in 2004.

This is a fabrication, Nograles said. "He's not telling a correct story, he's malicious," the Speaker said at last Friday's news conference. The basic difference between the two versions of the meeting touches on the presence of De los Angeles. Tan says he showed up; Nograles says he didn't. But the fact of the meeting is admitted by both.

Nograles reduces the motive of the meeting, and Tan's decision to make it public, to base politics. He says Tan, apparently a relative, asked him to pull some strings, so his appointment as PDIC president could be extended. And Tan's allegations about Legacy are merely viciously sour grapes, because Tan did not get the extension.

We do not know how much to credit Nograles' account—but his insistence that the entire case is political may have something to it. An all-but-ignored investigation by the BSP is still been case prepared by the PDIC, the mysterious absence of De los Angeles from any list of stockholders or officers of the 11 banks: this is not mere financial trickery, but political skullduggery.

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The Constitution in transition

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

JAMES MADISON, THE PRINCIPAL DRAFTER of the US Constitution, said that he did not pay much attention to the Executive Department, preferring instead to concentrate on the Legislative Department as the major agency of the government. But when organizing in the Constitutional Convention of 1787, that is why the article on the Legislative Department, which was patterned after the "Mother of Parliaments" in England (for with its republican innovations it preached the doctrine on the Executive and Judicial Departments.

The delegates must have felt that there was not much need to provide for the Executive Department because it was generally conceded to be headed by their chairman, the highly respected Gen. George Washington, who would exercise its powers with the same prudent and temperate hand he had exhibited as the military leader of the American Revolution. As for the brief article on the Judicial Department, it is only three sections would take years before the powers of the federal Supreme Court would be respected, recognized and even challenged.

As many distinguished writers on the American presidency have unanimously observed, the powers of that office would depend on the strength or weakness of the person occupying it. John Quincy Adams, for all his intellect and erudition, vacillated his record with his feet on two speeds: when he [was] really [a] weakling and incompetent; and Richard Nixon with his equal corruption that almost had him impeached. In contrast, strong presidents like Lincoln, the two Roosevelts, and Truman gave their with great prestige and energy with their leadership.

It was different here in the Philippines when the elected delegates to the Constitutional Convention of 1934 met to draft the Constitution of the Commonwealth. The two top leaders of the country, Manuel L. Quezon and Sergio Osmeña, who naturally would be looked on to wield their influence in the framing of that document. Quezon was especially interested in its Article VII providing for the Executive Department that he was expecting to head.

One might surmise that all the provisions in that article were first cleared with Quezon before they were submitted in the plenary session of the Convention. Claro M. Recto, who was its president, would have seen to that as an avid leader who had been elected to replace its temporary chairman, Jose P. Laurel, a pro supporter of Osmeña. Both would have defeated the Constitution although Laurel said that, like any human handiwork, it was lacking in "perfection and perfectibility."

Interestingly among the various Quezon must have approved is Sec. 10 (2) of Art. VII, par. 2, making the President the commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and allowing him to suspend the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus and place the Philippines or any part thereof under martial law. He could not have imagined that a certain Ferdinand Marcos, who was then a student in the UP College of Law, would later use that provision to place 80,000,000 Filipinos under his absolute control.

That Constitution was ratified in 1935 but by 1940 it had been amended to change the term of the President from six years without reelection to four years with one re-election. The reincarnated National Assembly was replaced with a Senatorial Congress of the Philippines, and the statutory Commission on Elections became a constitutional body.

In 1971, a new Constitutional Convention was elected to revise the 1935 Constitution. Its proceedings were marred by accusations of bribery by Marcos supporters scheming to retain their leader in illicit power. Exposé of this scandal and other government anomalies led to the declaration of martial law the next year and the overriding of the 1973 draft by the new regime into the Constitution of 1973.

In its valid ratification through the hand of the gun of the indoctrinated military began the endless tyranny that loitered with the assassination of Benny Aquino in 1983 and perished with the incendiary of President Cory in 1986. She appointed a Constitutional Commission to prepare the Constitution of 1987, which Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo supporters now want to revise to keep her in office after the end of her current term.

The present Charter is not without its practical credits. President Fidel V. Ramos sought to extend his term through the initiative, which was disauthorized twice by the high tribunal. President Joseph Estrada created a commission to propose the abolishment of the autocratic provisions of the unduly underwritten. Presidents Arroyo thinks she can better interpret the Charter to suit her own designs.

2009 is a crucial year because any later attempt to revise the Charter would present the holding of the next presidential election simultaneously in 2010. This would frustrate the plans of a number of candidates who are now already campaigning through the commercials starting them on television. Most especially would it be inimical to Mr. Arroyo who seems to be the head of a parliamentary government established by the Cha-cha or the Con-con.

Many people would support the rewriting of the Constitution provided it is done not now but after Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo shall have retired. Their objection is not to the proposed revision but to La Chaviz's continued insensitivity after 2010.

Message clear and simple

MOMENTS

Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD

THE STORY IS TOLD ABOUT A CATHOLIC man who lay dying on the street after he was struck by a bus. "Get the a priest to give me the last rites!" he pleaded. Minutes passed, and no one crept out of the crowd. Finally, a Protestant and an Iglesia "I am not a priest. I am not even a Christian, but for 50 years now I have lived behind a Catholic church, and every night I overhear their sermon. So now, repeat after me: B-I, I-29, X-32, G-51, O-72. Bingo!"

* * *

In today's Gospel (Mk. 1, 21-28), we hear about how the people were astonished at the teachings of Jesus. "What is this? A new teaching with authority. He commands even the unclean spirits and they obey Him." What message are we giving to people? Have we watered down the Gospel message? Can people still hear Jesus' powerful words and strength or? Can Jesus Himself still recognize His original message through us?

* * *

Someone said on this theme prayer: "Dear Lord, Your will, nothing more, nothing less, nothing else. Amen." The same could be said of Jesus' Gospel message.

Of course, this is very hard to be told and acted. But let us make sure that in packaging the message, we do not adulterate, bend or, worse, alter it.

* * *

As a young priest in La Paz, Abra, I remember telling an old man that I just came from Ifugao for the last thing of the Socano Bible. He thought for a while, then said: "Oh, it's nice that God can finally understand and speak Ilocano!" That incident made me realize the importance of making God's message simple and clear, especially for the simple people. May the word clothed in flesh, joyous and liberating, also resonate from our hearts unclean spirits that seek popularity instead of faithfulness, fame instead of truthfulness.

Take note that Jesus' fame was incidental. In other words, fame was not His objective. It was the result of the purity of His heart, the clarity of His message, and the truthfulness of His mission. Nowadays, there are a lot of people who will do anything and everything just to be popular and famous. Something is basically wrong when "things" become a primary concern, and substance becomes secondary and irrelevant.

* * *

Expect the crews, with its entourage of members and clients, to come to town with the elections just around. Expect, too, that more money-generating projects and operations will increase so as to put the necessary logistics in place for the elections. Is all this new? Substance? Who talks about substance nowadays in the way we do politics and governance in our country? Money, it seems, has become, and is, the bottom line.

May the Gospel message drive out the evil love of greed, cheating, lying and stealing as prevalent in our country these days.

* * *

Fame or shame? Some people, in their frustrated and controlled desire for fame, have forgotten conscience and shame.

* * *

Meeting recently Fr. Butch Esparis of the Diocese of Davao was such a humbling and edifying experience. One year after an disastrous, Father Butch met a reflexive accident that left him paralyzed, but not idle. From his wheelchair, he continued to teach, preach and broadcast, and do his priestly ministry. For six years now he undergoes dialysis. He has spent 26 years of his priestly life in the "suffering ministry." Through him, and through people like him who live their lives emotionally and already for others, a lot of blessings come our way, and the Word of God is proclaimed effectively and efficaciously. Meeting him was such a powerful message. Indeed, they say little who have much. Love, like truth need not be long, need not be loud.

* * *

PHILIPPINE SSS CENTENNIAL MOMENT: Bro. Richard Steele came to the Philippines in the early '50s and ran the Ateneo's Carpentry Shop which produced fine church furniture, and even radio and TV wooden housings. He was a diligent and gifted worker who worked hard and prayed hard. In his retirement years, he was to teach parts but he never considered. I remember asking him one time how he was. He reply: "I am always in pain. Sometimes more, sometimes less, but I am always in pain, and I am always offering." Powerful message. So Bible, no gimmicks. No frailties. Just much Pluto and simple.

* * *

Fr. Thomas Green, SJ will give a session on "Growing in Prayer" at the Union Church of Manila on Feb. 7, 2009, 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., to explain the stages of growth in our prayer life. For more details, contact Ms. Emmy Bautista at 0918-8144186 or e-mail edz8368@gmail.com.

* * *

An invitation to join a pilgrimage tour and Filipino community outreach to Doha and Abu Dhabi from Feb. 20-28. For more details, call (02) 5234568 or (02) 7237457.

* * *

A moment with the Lord:

Lord, keep my heart pure, and my message clear and simple. Amen.

Worsening

WITH DUE RESPECT

Artemio V. Panganiban

nations interviewed managers from 452 companies in Metro Manila, Cebu City and Davao City it staggering 71 percent said they were blatantly asked for bribes in the conduct of their business, the others said they were asked for several business permits, complied with import regulations, paid customs duties and income taxes, and supplied the government with goods and services.

In his sparkling inaugural address, US President Barack Obama resolved, "To those who cling to power through corruption and deceit, know that you are on the wrong side of history but we will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist." What was the reply of our officials to these reports and to Obama's offer?

I am afraid mostly flawed, evasive and finger-pointing, like calling TI biased and suggesting it has been influenced by the opposition; or ignoring the World Bank ratings and allowing the blacklisted firms to bid in government-funded projects; or proposing the creation of other bodies to replace the corrupt bureaucracy; or condemning the presidential system and proposing the parliamentary form as the magic remedy; or dismissing the Obama warning and saying that all governments are corrupt anyway (Bahala sila sa buhay nila).

Disgusting, sight-obscene. How obscene to preserving and promoting human rights, what has been our government's record?

According to CHR Chair Dr. Leila de Lima, it has been "dismal." She deplored the resurgence of extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances with the Armed Forces as the primary suspect." Arch. Bishop Angel N. Lagdameo lamented that last December's observances of Human Rights Day gave him "a feeling of shame and embarrassment because of the innumerable human rights violations that have remained unrestrained, unexplained and unsolved or covered up by events."

The human rights group Karapatan documented 977 victims of extrajudicial killings, 1,018 victims of torture, and 1,464 victims of illegal arrest during the last eight years.

The harrowing tale narrated by Raymund Manalo of his, and his brother Reynaldo's torture (as well as that of missing UP students Karen Empeño and Sherlyn Cadapan) at the hands of the military and police in the Philippines' remotest province (the most jaded among us of the crying need to vindicate human rights. This was recently aired in GMA's "Storyline."

Role of the private sector. I do not have enough space to discuss the recommendations to combat these worsening conditions and human rights abuses. However, my full speech is in www.panganiban.ph. (Sorry this is not in speech-ese. Di ako sanay sa bibig-usapang-kanto.)

But in brief, I urged the audience to unite in the strict enforcement of the ethical standards. Like the Japanese, I said, "Of dishonor I cannot die. In equity, honor, prudence and patriotism. I also asked them to strengthen any democratic institutions by distributing their ear officials the faithful performance of their duties, not to take more than reasonable fees and to have accountability. The problem is that the cancer of incompetence, misfeasance and dishonesty is the appointing authority more than to the Constitution and to the people, have metastasized to many of our leaders.

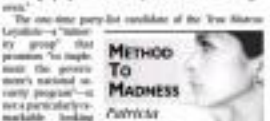
Pio, the people, should help this cancer from metastasizing any further. One way is oversight and nonpartisan watching that is, to demand that officials perform their duties ethically, courageously and competently. Otherwise, if they neglect or fail to do so, we should ask for their resignation or if demanded their impeachment with the official, the management and the operation.

(Comments are welcome at jbp@supremecourt.gov.ph/jbpmail.com.)

The knighting of Jovito Palparan

RETIRED MAJ. GEN. JOVITO PALPARAN, FORMER COMmanding general of the Philippine Army's 7th and 8th Infantry Divisions, erstwhile army chief of staff, holder of Distinguished Service Stars and a Gold Cross Medal, known in various circles as alternately "The Butcher" and "Berdugo," is a great believer of civilian involvement in counterinsurgency. "I encourage people victimized by communist rebels to get even," he said.

The one-time party-list candidate of the Ang Ahensya Layalista—a "fallist" ry group" that promises "to implement the government's national security program"—is not a particularly remarkable looking man, unless you count the eyebrows.



METHOD TO MADNESS

Patricia Evangelista

Facing nine points over the random eyes, and the near-cadaverous hollows of his face. He was born in Capiznon de Oro on Sept. 12, 58 years ago, has five children, including a son named Bullet—and counts as an achievement "clearing eight provinces of the influence of communists and their sympathizers." Within the term of President Macapagal-Arroyo, Palparan was promoted twice; in 2005 he made the step from colonel to brigadier general. In 2008, the President named him major general, just months after his previous promotion. In her 2006 State of the Nation Address, President Arroyo acknowledged Palparan for his affirmative actions "rebel returnees."

The President also proclaimed said sting vast, wants the arrests—head of drug cabinet. Last week, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said a search committee was considering Palparan's appointment as a member of the Dangerous Drugs Board.

Ermita says that the government was "studying what would be the immediate ramification for him." It may seem odd that the government finds itself responsible for the placement of former army officers in civilian positions, but with 23 police and military officials serving in plum government positions, including ambassadorships to Australia and the leadership of the Manila Economic and Cultural Office, this isn't a strange phenomenon. What is strange is that for man, this particular man whose very name inspires images of blood and violence, who has been named, repeatedly in acts of brutality that have caused grown men to cry themselves, and women to bleed drains of blood into bunches of pins, is being rewarded for "his exploits."

A Manila Times editorial says that the appointment of Palparan constitutes "good news, ... precisely from the fact he is experienced in counter-insurgency." Palparan's reputation precedes him, says Junior Secretary Raul Gonzalez. He is "painted as a devil," and "that kind of reputation may be good for the campaign against drugs." It is "public opinion," says incoming Press Secretary Jorge Bermudez, that Palparan would come under fire for being "effective" against "communist terrorists."

His name is Jovito Palparan, and there is reason they still hit on the lunches—although he was known as the torturer as early as 2001. Before his retirement in 2006, Palparan was linked to more than 500 cases of human rights abuse, namely summary executions and disappearances, during his term as commander of the 20th Infantry Battalion in Central Luzon, 204th Infantry Battalion in Masbate and Southern, and 8th Infantry Division in Samar and Leyte.

In 2007, a government-initiated commission headed by retired Supreme Court Justice Jose Melo recommended in its final report the investigation of retired Army Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan for his alleged involvement in the killing of 5 human rights activists. "General Palparan and perhaps some of his superior officers may be held culpable for failing to prevent, punish or condemn the killings under the principle of command responsibility."

Last October, a Supreme Court decision upheld the findings of the Court of Appeals linking Palparan to the abduction of brothers Raymond and Reynaldo Manalo, both farmers in Bulacan who were taken under military custody for 10 months on suspicion of being NPA rebels. Manalo's testimony, corroborated by 2 others, names Palparan as the commander of the 24

TALK of the TOWN

Please send feedback to
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Julia Juan V. Sarmiento Jr.

Pawnshops lifeline in hard times

By Carlo Paras Sison

THE MASSIVE JOB CUTS being implemented by manufacturers and exporters amid the global economic crisis may lead to an increase in the number of unredeemed personal items.

"Every financial crisis that results in mass layoffs will have a ripple effect. We saw that happened in 1986, again in 1997, and we expect to see the same now. A crisis affects all industries—especially financial institutions or intermediaries like pawnshops," says Abbie Abbas, vice president of Chamber of Pawnbrokers of the Philippines Inc.

The chamber represents about half of more than 11,000 pawnshops in the country, including the big Lhuillier and Tambunting chains.

Abbas says workers, who may have acquired a few assets during the good years, may resort to pawning. But without regular employment they will be too hard up to redeem the items.

"Then pawnshops will have a problem because we do not expect a surplus for foreclosed assets. Who will buy them? But this is assuming our clients will have items to pawn," he says.

Abbas estimates that 95 percent of pawnshops serve SME (small and medium enterprises) who have no access to credit. These clients can't open bank accounts because the minimum balance required is too steep, or because they have no permanent address. So they don't normally qualify for credit cards or membership in savings and loan associations that have easier savings requirements.

Jewelry, cell phones

Pawnshops often provide loans from ₱5,000 to ₱2,500, with jewelry, cell phones and appliances commonly used as collateral. Interest rates average 4 percent to 5 percent a month, with a minimum term of 30 days, renewable monthly.

If the borrower does not redeem the pawned asset when the loan falls due, all he has to do to pay the interest for the next month to keep the loan current. Loans for which interest has not been paid 90 days after maturity are deemed expired and pawnbrokers are no-threatened to sell the items to recover their cash.

Remittance centers

Lower credit and requirements in the last 10 years have led to easier access to cash, resulting in a general decline in the traditional pawnshop business. This has caused many pawnshops to also act as remittance centers, offering to overthrone as pickup centers for cash sent by overseas workers to their families.

"We noticed that more and more pawnshops have had to double as remittance centers. At first, it was considered as an odd-on service because pawnshops are quite accessible. But soon, more than half of the business came from remittance services instead of pawns," says Abbas.

He says members of the chamber observed that 2008 remittances were softer or did not grow as fast as they did in 2007. In addition, pawn redemptions that normally occurs in December when people supposedly have extra cash did not happen. Rather, some clients came in to pay loan interest then redeem their jewelry.

"We saw a combination of two things that offer a bad prognosis for the business: retrenchment came in but the valuables were lost as much as we had expected—and clients probably did not have as much cash as they wanted because they did not redeem their jewelry. It's going to be a tough year," Abbas says.

For the month, the industry expects generally flat loan volumes in 2009.

"Unlike in the United States where pawnshops are experiencing a lot of activity because of a recession, the Philippines is not feeling the (full brunt of the) recession yet. This could be why we are not seeing an increase in pawns. Or it could also be because people no longer have anything to pawn," Abbas says.

High-end market

Still, there is a segment of the pawnshop industry that will likely experience a boom: the high-end market. (See story below.)

Abbas acknowledges that niche players that focus on the affluent can look forward to more business in 2009, but remains mindful that the greater majority of pawnshop clients will be hard up.

License plate

A Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas supervising specialist has found that 26 percent of pawnshops are not registered, most of them located outside Metro Manila.

This presents a risk to consumers as unregistered pawnshops may not act on the drop of a hat and clients will have no one to call after they lose their pawned items.

It is important, then, to look for the Bangko Sentral-issued pawnshop license plate to ensure that the pawnshop is legitimate and authorized to do business.

Most of those found outside could have actually applied for licenses, according to Abbas.

MIKE Dizon, president of a pawnshop that caters to the high-end market, with unredeemed time pieces like Swiss watches in its store in Glorietta. ALEX NINO

History

Pawn loans have been in existence for at least 3,000 years, dating back to ancient China and the early Roman and Greek civilizations and providing financial rescue to all social classes.

Accounts say that English king Edward III and Henry V in 1338 and 1413, respectively, pawned their jewels to raise money for war, while Queen Isabella pawned hers in the 15th century to finance Christopher Columbus' voyage to the New World.

Golden spheres

The pawnbrokers' symbol is three golden spheres suspended from a bar, part of the coat of arms of the Medicis, a famous Italian family who found their wealth and political power in banking and commerce in the 15th century.

In the Philippines, the Archdiocese of Manila established what was considered the country's first savings bank in 1888. Though intended to be a bank, Monte de Piedad y Cabo de Ahorros also operated as a pawnshop by providing collateral-backed loans to the poor.

A group of pawnbrokers established the Philippine Pawnbrokers Association Inc. (Manila in 1949. A member of nearly several generations members, who left the need for a "more dynamic" organization, elected a set of officers in 1956.

Two years later, the group officially changed its name to Chamber of Pawnbrokers of the Philippines Inc. (CP-PI), which still exists today. Four presidents of the (PPI include Ana P. Tambunting and Philippe J. Lhuillier.

Pawnshop Act

On Aug. 29, 1973, President Ferdinand Marcos issued Presidential Decree No. 114, or the Pawnshop Regulation Act. It required pawnshop owners to file an information sheet, under oath, with the Central Bank (now the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas), and set the minimum paid-in capital of any pawnshop at ₱100,000.

The Act also required that only Filipinos could own a pawnshop. In the case of a partnership, at least 70 percent of the voting capital stock should be owned by Filipino citizens. If it is a corporation, at least 70 percent of voting members should be Filipinos.

Alma Victoria, Inquirer Research

Yes, even the rich go to pawnbrokers

By Norman Sison

ALL PAWNSHOPS TRUE to "anything of value" as loan collateral, as the sign says, but in Rockwell, the sign says just to boast. But this same pawnshop, Agencia de Empeños de Makati, goes a bit further.

Aside from the usual jewelry and appliances, however, in vault also houses several paintings, antique wooden sculptures, Louis Vuitton and other expensive bags, Swiss watches, pricey electronics such as plasma TV, iPods and audio systems.

Mike Dizon, president of Agencia de Empeños de Makati, says it is a common misconception that pawnshops are only for the common people. Pawnshop solutions is poor or middle class notions are, after all, regular headlines that you read in newspaper's metro section.

Indeed, why pawn if you're rich and can afford to post the conventional logic. Also, in the snobbish world of the social elite, you don't want to go around telling people that you're short of money.

Business up

Dizon believes that if the world continues to go deeper in to recession, it won't be long before even the well-to-do begin to not from the crisis and start pawning their assets.

"The business went up by over 50 percent in the second half of last year compared with the year before," he says.

He expects business to be brisk this year. "Precisely because of the recession in the United States and all of the world, there will be layoffs, and many expiring contracts of overseas workers will not be renewed. As a result, liquidity will be tight and most people will want to have easier credit to meet their short-term requirements."

So far, the Philippines' social elite have been spared the worldwide economic meltdown as it is of our clients borrow because of a temporary cash need. Sometimes, they just bill their wallet at home and needed to pay for a quick purchase. If they need P5,000 or maybe P100,000 at most, they would not want to go to a bank for such a small," says Dizon.

Knack for loading

He decided to go into the business after graduating from college over a decade ago after realizing his knack for lending money to family and friends. But he wanted to be unique. "Pawnshops are one of highly competitive businesses. I really saw that there was a need for something different."

Now, you would presume that banks only cater to those with deep pockets. Not so, Dizon says. Even the rich get turned away because banks require a lot of minute requirements

Across the NATION
Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

Atienza orders stop to new mining projects in south Palawan

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Environment Secretary Jesselito Atienza issued Saturday an order imposing a moratorium on new mining projects in southern Palawan and vowed to act quick to have the area's largest cockatoo roosting site, Mt. Mantalingahan Range, declared as a protected area.

Atienza, who visited the capital to preside over the meeting of the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development, said the order was in response to an earlier resolution passed by the provincial government calling for a 25-year mining moratorium in the province.

"Palawan is the country's last frontier in forestry as well as in biodiversity thus, we need to ensure its sustainable development," said Atienza.

"Let's improve a moratorium on mining to give Palawan some breathing space."

The order effectively puts a halt to at least 45 large-scale mining rights applications lensed mostly around the Mt. Mantalingahan forests.

DENR records showed that the total number of applications, involving 116,999.57 hectares, cover 57 percent of the entire Mt. Mantalingahan Range.

Four large-scale mining projects and three small-scale operations are currently the provincial government are operating in southern Palawan, an area rich in nickel and chromite deposits.

Atienza vowed to speed up the process for President Macapagal-Arroyo to have the 125,000-hectare forest declared as a protected landscape, a status that will ban logging and mining in the mountain range.

Last week, the provincial board also dismissed on appeal by a group of tribal leaders to allow commercial mining in the area and forego of the planned declaration of the protected area.

"If there are tribal leaders who oppose this plan, they are misinformed," Atienza said.

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) said it has dropped its opposition in the year to declare Mantalingahan a protected area. Rodilyn D. Ateda, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Davao City vigilantes' toll: 20 dead

DAVAO CITY—AT LEAST 20 people have been killed in vigilante executions here since the start of the year, but police kept denying the existence of death squads that preyed on crime suspects.

The victims of summary executions, all killed by motorcycle-riding gunmen, were believed suspects of the Davao Death Squad (DDS).

The number of victims was bigger last year, but authorities point to gang rivalry as the reason for the killings.

Senior Supt. Ramon Apolinario, city police chief, said the DDS did not exist.

"There is no community or city that will allow these groups to do things beyond legal means," he said.

Apolinario refused earlier claims by Mayor Rodrigo Duterte that there was no vigilante group that targets crime suspects here.

"There are a number of killings, persons who were killed for different reasons and there are what we are investigating," Apolinario said.

He said not all of the victims were drug suspects.

He said some of the attacks were motivated by "personal grudges or business-related incidents."

But Kelly Delgado, secretary general of Kampusan, said Apolinario was lying about the non-existence of a vigilante group in the city.

Delgado said the vigilante group may not necessarily be named DDS but it does exist.

"That's a lie. how do you then describe these killings?" he asked.

Delgado said police has most of here many were killed in encounters with alleged drugs or other crimes this year alone because "the killings happen almost on a daily basis."

Delgado said Kampusan believes some law enforcers were involved in the killings.

Charito Alis, 50, who lost her son in one of the attacks in 2005, said she shares that suspicion.

Alis said the killings would have long stopped if authorities were not behind them.

Alberto Muyot, Commission on Human Rights director for Southern Mindanao, said the lack of witnesses keeps the killings unsolved.

Philip Alston, United Nations special rapporteur who visited the city to investigate the killings as part of his mission to the Philippines, also said in his report that authorities were almost likely behind the killings.

Alston pointed out that none of the killings had been solved.

Muyot said nobody was willing to testify against those involved in the attacks. Dennis Jay C. Santos, Inquirer Mindanao

FLOOD TRANSPORT
Muslim children in the flooded village of Kalanan, North Cotabato use improvised rafts to move around their community. Floods triggered by heavy rains destroyed at least P146 million in crops and pieces of property in six towns of the province. EDWIN BACASMAS/INQUIRER MINDANAO

100-yr-old Baguio stays stuck to English fame

BAGUIO CITY—ASK ANYONE to name a Filipino city whose residents can speak "English with the best of 'em," and centuries-old Baguio will always be on his list.

The choice should be obvious.

This summer capital was designed by Chicago architect Daniel Burnham and built by the American colonial government in 1909.

Teachers' Camp, which was established by the American Thomasites in Baguio 100 years ago, is the bedrock of the country's public education system.

Some of the first educated Igorots were schooled by Episcopalian Missionary Bishop Charles Henry, who was the subject of a recent photo exhibit, "A Legacy of Education" at a downtown mall here.

The search for an "English-speaking Igorot" still inquires the uninformed and the unenlightened in resort to Baguio even in this day.

But are Ibaloi intonation and linguistics and the story of the city's enduring affinity with English more far deeper than American-designed public education.

> It was also a matter of pride for the Baguio-based Igorots to master the language, so it was spoken at home....

Ferdinie Pinugpuk, a linguistics professor of the St. Louis University, said the Ibaloi language of Baguio's dominant Cordilleran tribe has striking similarities to basic English.

"This is not common to any other Filipino dialect. In the Ibaloi recognize the English syllables 'th' and 'f' because they have words that sound the same. Tagalog does not have f-letter syllables)... not even core languages in Northern Luzon," Pinugpuk said.

The Ibaloi sound for public entrance, for example, is "janjan," and present-day Ibaloi still yells "Japas" when they want someone to jump over a fence.

"It was also a matter of pride for the Baguio-based Igorots to master the language, so it was spoken at home. And their sons spoke it as their children—until it became a common language," Pinugpuk said.

He noted that by studying the household language used by Baguio-based Ibaloi elders.

A study by University of the Philippines Baguio professor Charito Anina Reyes illustrates that pioneering Ibaloi teachers, who were trained by the Thomasites, purely dropped how the first educated Igorots were "civilized American style." Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Salmonella infection in pigs rises in Samar town

By Vicente Labro
Inquirer Visayas

CALBIGA CITY—SALMONELLA has recently infected more than 700 pigs in a town in Samar but agriculture officials said there was no cause for alarm.

Leo Cabrella, executive regional director of the Department of Agriculture, said at a meeting that 84 pigs out of some 8,900 pigs in Sto. Rita, a town in Samar 48 kilometers away from Tacloban City had died of salmonella infection.

Cabrella said the salmonella infection started in December last year but was reported to the DA only on Jan. 20.

Some reports from farmers, government agriculturists and veterinarians attended the meeting in Calbiga City on Friday.

Cabrella said a quick response team from his office conducted a two-day animal health mission on Jan. 28-29 in the villages, vaccinating sick pigs and conducting an information drive on salmonellosis and how to deal with it.

Cabrella also said he would lead a quick response team to Daram, Zumarraga, Villareal and Santa Margarita after several pigs have shown signs of salmonella infection in six villages of the island town.

Dolores Manzano, Samar municipal agriculturist, reported during the meeting that 16-35 pigs from each of six barangays in their town have manifested signs of salmonella infection, such as loss of appetite, diarrhea and high fever.

Manzano identified the villages as Barawan, Isang, Calawan-an, Pandang, Sumosom and Balogo.

Sto. Rita Mayor Kits Idolor said sick pigs in the municipality were either stay outside or from backyard piggeries that don't observe proper hygiene and sanitation.

Idolor said he had initiated the setting up of a checkpoint in the village line Juan to prevent the transport of sick and slaughtered pigs from his town to other towns, especially Tacloban City which is just at the other end of the San Juanico Bridge.

Dr. Ferdee Abenoro, Tacloban City veterinarian, said the city government has also set up checkpoints in the city.

Townsfolk complain of ecozone pollution

By Melvin Gascon
Inquirer Northern Luzon

SANTA ANA, CAGAYAN—Officials and residents of this coastal town on Friday protested the alleged environmental destruction caused by the operations of casinos of the Cagayan Special Economic Freeport Zone here.

In a dialogue, they testified the failure of the Cagayan Economic Zone Authority (Ceza) to check on the alleged illegal dumping of garbage and sewage waste from two casino complexes, which, they said, has been polluting the town's waters.

"The people of Santa Ana have long complained about these problems but our calls have not been heeded. It is painful for us to see that these things are happening because this is not what we envisioned [the freeport zone] to be," said former Governor Jesse Carella.

Julina Jovy Gonzales, officer in charge of the Cuza field office here, said the loud noise emanating from resort discharged by the two resort plazas in the complex could have been due to a technical malfunction.

"But we would like to assure you that waste discharged from the two resort plazas is not toxic and does not cause any harmful effects on the environment," he told officials and residents who attended the dialogue at the resort's gymnasium.

Santa Ana officials said it was the town of Sta. Ana itself that had no sewage system. Wastewater from the Gaza complex is treated and some are recycled for use in toilets, they said.

Ricky's dialogue between church leaders and local and Ceza officials was conducted amid complaints from residents over the supposed resonating environmental condition in the town due to waste allegedly produced by the operations of two casinos in Barangay Centro.

The influx of tourists, as well as Chinese workers, caused a water disposal problem for Santa Ana, they said.

Ceza officials who attended the dialogue apologized to the residents for the problems that had been allegedly caused by the casinos' operations, but assured them that their office was trying its best to solve them.

Jhon Almonalo, village chair of Tangatan, urged officials to inspect the casinos' treatment facilities to quell suspicions that sewage being dumped into a lagoon in the village had been causing pollution there.

The two-hectare lagoon used to be a communal fishpond for about 100 families in the area, Almonalo said.

CLEARED AREA
Vice President Noli de Castro, chair of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, turns over to Mike Defensor, Philippine National Railways chair, some 1.5 km of area that has been cleared of informal settlers along the route of the Manila-Southrail Linkage Project. CENTER FOR HOUSING

INQUIRER Mindanao

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Ex-MNLF woman reb finds new cause

By Jeffrey Tupas
Inquirer Mindanao, Tawi-Tawi

HER CALMNESS WAS contagious, if not reassuring—things will be all right. Soon enough, one forgot about the rusty boat sway or the crazy wind that, at one point, ripped the tired blue tarp that turned out to be a weak shield.

Hidmitie Sali offered a piece of soft bread she bought from mainland Tawi-Tawi, her other hand firmly holding the boat's wooden beam to keep her balance. Near her right foot was a small pool of rainwater that had dripped through the cracks of the roof.

When her gesture was politely turned down, she showed something else—a black and white photo that yellowed through time and years of struggle. Taken in 1975, the photo shows Sali, then 16, and her husband Ismail, his hair down to the waist, and their 2-month-old daughter, Quorrahar.

It was taken at the height of the government's war against Moro rebels in Mindanao, three years after armagisan Nur Misuari declared martial law and seven years after soldiers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines massacred 28 Moro recruits on Corregidor Island.

Revered the story behind the photo two years earlier, Panasoy-year-old Sali was curious. Liberation? Free Mindanao? Free the Moro world? The issues spread across the island provinces following the tragic events that involved the government and the Moro people.

THE FORMER: Moro combatant-turned into peace and development advocate and community leader

PHOTO BY JEFFREY TUPAS/INQUIRER MINDANAO

Tawi-Tawi residents were already arming themselves; many had already gone to the mountains. Sali, a sophomore of the Mindanao State University in the province, would be joining the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) despite her parents' disapproval.

Sali was the youngest among 180 Moro women recruits of the MNLF. Why were she remain in the revolution that was dominated by "strong men"?

Lost baby

"The Moro people were lured by a force that must be stopped or else the Moro people will vanish without dignity. We had to take arms . . . we had to kill . . . or we would all die helpless, at the mercy of the oppressive governments," she said.

Two months after the photo was taken, Quorrahar died deep in the mountains of Tawi-Tawi. For two weeks, Sali said, the baby had suffered from fever, perhaps brought about when 105-mm mortar bomb fired by soldiers fell near where they were hiding. Quorrahar's father, a top leader of the MNLF now fighting fiercely on the border.

"That was a difficult time for us, but we had to accept it because we were fighting a revolution. We cannot be threatened by the pain of losing someone as many are relying on us," Sali said.

She had since mustered pain and made sure to enrol in armed struggle by becoming an expert in guns. With a pockmarked grin, she declared: "Magaling akong mang-target ng kalaban . . . (I can very well target an enemy)," and added that "hand'lon mo haditeng kung dun ang riba mamo ng buhi ko . . . (I no longer count how many I had shot)."

Sali recalled how her self-imposed hunger and the prospect of unexpected armed encounter while walking from Zamboanga to Davao for months, passing through Spl and Bupalan cities. "There were times we would starve for days because we were not allowed to cook because the enemies might hear our presence from the smoke," she said.

THE PICTURE: Sali's consolation. It shows Sali and her husband and man taken at the height of the war between the Moro National Liberation Front and government.

PHOTO BY JEFFREY TUPAS/INQUIRER MINDANAO

Life in Malaysia

She said they often moved off their hangars with heaven of the "hellmove" and "hardwog," planters and the heart of "bump," which was also an effective cure for malaria.

From Tawi-Tawi, she said, they took an outrigger boat to Pata Island in Jolo, then to Basilan to Basilan, and Olutpal in Zamboanga City.

For a decade, Sali fought the government for Moro self-determination and freedom. In 1984, she and her husband, who lost a leg during the war, went to Malaysia just as negotiations for a final peace agreement between the MNLF and the Philippine government was underway.

Sali worked in a plywood factory earning 450 ringgits (US $130) a month to help sustain the needs of her growing family. When her husband took a second wife, she decided to separate from him and found herself and her children going back to Tawi-Tawi.

"It was a decision for me and my children. I knew that we can survive and I was right," she said.

Sali's eldest son, a graduate of computer science, now works in a school in Dubai. Another works in a hospital in Saudi Arabia, while another son is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Islamic Studies degree in a state university in Zamboanga City.

A daughter had to stop her nursing studies because of financial constraints. The youngest son is a second year high school student.

"My land is nascent to the reality that life is still difficult for the Moro people although many good things arrived for us because of the peace agreement ... still, the struggle continues and it is only ourselves who can really help us," Sali said.

Women's group

Now 50 years old, the former Amoako-wielding mother has become one of the most prominent women leaders in Tawi-Tawi. She chairs the Tawi-Tawi Paraguayan Women's Association. (The name appears to be a reminder of the social attacks launched by the government against the Moro rebels.)

Launched immediately after the peace agreement between the MNLF and the government was signed in 1996, the association has grown to deliver change to the lives of women in Sibutad Island, especially those whose families were combatants of the MNLF.

Last year, the group received 19,00,000 in livelihood assistance under the Act for Peace Program of the United Nations and the Philippine government.

Sali and her comrades are now busy cooking jar, bowls, pajamas, patgamas, bubu, alcalang, atuk, mahmar and other indigenous local and delicacies that they sell around the island. They also do basic embroidery that shows the people's inner craftsmanship and artistry.

"The struggle of the people is never ending and still, despite our age, many of us are energized and kissed not to put it down. Only that this time, for us, it is a little different compared to the armed struggle. Now, the struggle that we fight depends on us—mothers to their children and wives to their husbands—and on our willingness and determination to do it," Sali said.

Williams crushes Safina, collects 10th Grand Slam title

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA—SERENA Williams routed Dinara Safina, 6-0, 6-3, Saturday to win the Australian Open—her 10th Grand Slam title—and return to the No. 1 ranking.

It was total domination for second-seeded Williams, who looked at ease in winning back-to-back Grand Slam titles and wins moving fluidly on the court.

That was a sharp contrast to No. 1 Safina, who was tight from the start. Later apologizing to the crowd for her performance, she said Williams was just too good, leaving her feeling like a bulldog.

"I absolutely slowly have playing here," the 23-year-old Williams said. "You guys were for me so much. I don't get final every where. So thank you so much."

In the first game, Safina double-faulted three times, including on break point. Williams ran off 18 of the last 20 points in the three sets to finish it in 23 minutes.

Other than countless that resulted partly due to illness or injury, it was the most lopsided Australian Open women's final since 1962, when Margaret Smith beat Jan Lehane 6-0, 6-2.

It was Williams' second overwhelming victory in a final in Melbourne Park, where she kept alive her streak of wins dating to odd-numbered years since 2001. Coming into the 2007 tournament untended after being plagued by injuries the year before, she beat top-seeded Maria Sharapova, 6-1, 6-2.

Sharapova rebounded to win last year but was unable to defend her title while recuperating from a shoulder injury.

Williams won the fifth meeting in nine four or more Australian titles. By making the singles and doubles finals, she already had become the all-time leading money winner in women's sports.

For winning the Australian singles title, she earned $1.2 million and now has career earnings of more than $23.5 million.

After Melbourne's heroic three-day heat wave unable to defend her title while recuperating from a shoulder injury.

Williams won the fifth meetings in nine four or more Australian titles. By making the singles and doubles finals, she already had become the all-time leading money winner in women's sports.

For winning the Australian singles title, she earned $1.2 million and now has career earnings of more than $23.5 million.

After Melbourne's heroic three-day

It's Macmac vs Willie for MVP

IN HUDDLE

Beth Coyiuto

DALE 'N TOOT'S Marcus Camilus was hoping the losing and the losing would stop once the semifinal ended, but with San Miguel Beer was ours.

In a farewell presser after Game 3 of the semifinal series with the Beermen, Macmac saluted the losing fans at the Cuneta Astrodome and thanked them for "inspiring" him to play hard.

While the PBA returned to Araneta for the championship series between TNT and Alaska, Macmac must have been dismayed to receive a familiar welcome, this time coming from the Alaska fans.

Macmac seemed to be not affected by the jeers, and if his members had slipped after the semifinal series, his load limit is to blame and not the opposing team's fans.

Leading the pack in statistical points after the elimination series, Macmac dropped to fourth place behind Cobe's Asi Taulava, Sta. Lucia's Kelly Williams and Alaska's Willie Miller in the race order, after the semifinals. Smashing up the cast is Jaypee Belencland of Giordano who's in fifth place.

Essentially, the battle for Best Player of the Conference is now between him and two-time MVP Willie Miller, since Cobe, Sta. Lucia and Giordano are now out of the running.

Hindi pa rako nagsisilam, sabi nga ni, Sabi ng[illegible] pa yung tao-boo," Macmac said.

* * *

Tonight, after Game 5 of the PBA-BPC Philippine Cup best-of-seven finals series, the PBA Press Corps (PBAPC) headed by rarely-seen-in-public president Wilson Belleza of the Philippine Star will deliberate on their choice of conference MVP.

It could be a third MVP for Miller or a first for Macmac, depending on their performances and the outcome of the game, with the pressure weighing more heavily on Macmac than Willie.

Since the PBAPC opted to vote secret, the choice has always turned out to be the winner.

The other elected PBAPC officers for 2009-2010 are Rempee's Tito Bautista, two-time president, People's Tonight's Dennis Macaraeg, re-elected vice president, Daily Tribune's Armand Caranduang, secretary, Ang Pilipino Ngayon's Jhun Balbuena, treasurer and Manila Bulletin's Percival Gavino, auditor.

* * *

Rumors circulate that Jose Jaworski was a special guest of Eric Gonzi, friend. Stanley Ho's owner George Chua, during the acquaintances dinner the latter hosted recently for his team.

Asked to deliver a short pep talk to the players, the big-I focused on the importance of discipline and attitude, his personal secret for longevity. His big 3-also-get-a-few words of advice to the team's new head coach Leo Isaac, who is his counterpart-to-be?

The Living Legend recently took over the post of his father-in-law, Sen. Manon Revilla, pose as chair of the Philippine Reclamation Authority.

Although the name Red Bull has been changed to Barako Bull, George Chua said his company will continue to market the Red Bull brand which is manufactured in Thailand.

* * *

According to organizer Eddie Bunsi of Great Britain, the Philippines was chosen as the site for the fourth World Cup of Billiards because the country has millions of billiards fans.

Eddie relates that when the first World Cup was staged in Wales, 10 nations from all over the United Kingdom motored to Newport in support and cheer for their billiardsayan.

It was like having a hometown advantage, Eddie said.

BOOM! John Baldos (left) and Mel Anthony Pascual of Magnolia square a Patrick Cabahug and the rest of the Beermen during the course of the tournament.

Magnolia sets final showdown vs Harbour five

By Jasmine W. Payo

MAGNOLIA FREEWATER TROOPED TO the Finals for the first time in three years after defeating Sta. Lucia 98-83 in the fourth conference in their do-or-die semifinal match in the PBA Fiba Lucchetti Cup yesterday at the Ynares Sports Arena in Pasig City.

A 12-0 spurt in the final stretch anchored on veterans Al Magpayo helped the Wizards stun out the series at 3-2.

"Powerful I pushed us to our maximum, on our limits," said Magnolia coach Ito Bonel. "But the players showed their superiorities in the fourth quarter."

Magnolia will go up against Ilaw-nian champion Harbour Centre in the best-of-five championship series starting Tuesday.

The Batang Pier, who are battling for an unprecedented sixth straight title, swept Hapee Toothpaste, 3-0, in the other semifinal pairing.

Ned Andersen shot 24 points built on a 20-of-35 shooting clip to pace the Wizards, who last won the crown over Sista or Shine in 2006.

Jaypee Mendoza scored two drive that pushed the Wizards within three, 77-79, midway in the fourth period before finishing with 18 markers.

Dylan Andrews also helped out by adding 14 points, eight rebounds and four assists.

But it was Magpayo who backed the decisive run by knocking in eight of his 11 points in the final period, including two triples that gave the Wizards an 85-76 advantage in the final three minutes after holding by as many as 12 points.

Poy Erram led the Phoenicians with 23 points, 10 rebounds and four blocks, two teammate Paul Lee was held scoreless by the Wizards in the final period.

The Wizards absolutely shackled James Martinez, who pumped in 17 points in the first three quarters but helped push the Energy Warriors ahead in 89-87.

The scores:

MAGNOLIA 98 – Andrews 18, Mendoza 14, Andersen 14, Magpayo 11, Bahay 9, Bonsol 8, Cabanos 5, Ayaay 5, Arquero 4, Rodriguez 2, Bulanadi

SANTA LUCIA 83 – Erram 23, Martinez 17, Legaspi 11, Lee 9, Cabahug 5, Arellano 4, Sabandal 2, Abalos 2, Fermin 1, Lowell, Gamboa

Quarters: 29-20, 51-47, 82-66, 98-83

Celtics cream Pistons for 10th straight triumph

ASHBURN HILLS, MICHIGAN—THE BOSTON Celtics brought up their second 10-game winning streak of the NBA season with a 96-78 rule over the Detroit Pistons on Friday.

The previous time the Celtics won 10 in a row was over a season ago, 1985-86, when they went on to win one of their 17 NBA titles.

Kevin Garnett scored 21 points to top the Boston scorers, while Paul Pierce had 20 and Ray Allen added 14.

The defending champions are an NBA-best 39-9 thanks to the current run and a best-in-the-record 70-game win streak early in the season.

Detroit's Allen Arenas scored 18 points, moving past Hall of Famer Charles Barkley and into 30th place on the NBA's career scoring list.

In other games, it was Indiana 114, Miami 103; Milwaukee 98, Toronto 93; Philadelphia 104, Washington 94; Atlanta 103, New Jersey 88; Cleveland 112, LA Clippers 95; LA Lakers 132, Minnesota 109; Denver 118, Charlotte 99; Utah 108, Oklahoma City 99; Golden State 91, New Orleans 87 and Chicago 100, Sacramento 88.

In Minneapolis, Los Angeles began a six-game road trip with their highest score of the season, defeating Minnesota.

Los Angeles' Andrew Bynum bolted his way inside to 27 points and 15 rebounds, a perfect complement to Kobe Bryant, who netted 30 points as the Lakers recorded a ninth consecutive win over the Timberwolves.

The Wolves rallied from a 20-point hole with an 18-7 run in the fourth quarter but couldn't get any closer. It was the most points they've allowed in regulation since the season.

AP GARNETT

Korean legend regrets not playing in RP

By Jasmine W. Payo

HIS MEMORY IS AS SHARP AS HIS fabled shooting touch.

To this day, South Korean basketball legend Shin Dong-Pa still remembers great Filipino players of the past, and even the time I went when his national team stunned the Philippines in a championship match 45 years ago.

"I have very great memories of the Philippines," said the 64-year-old Shin. "I think [the late Ed] Ocampo is the best Filipino player. In all my games, I never 40 to 50 points. But when I'm against Ocampo, I only make 10."

Dressed in the deadline name gracin of all time, Shin took sixty in our South Korea and the Philippines' earlier counterpart national from Asia's top team basketball powerhouses to discuss personal encounters.

"Along with Ocampo, I like [Ato Teodoro] Melencio and Freddie Webb are also among the best Filipino players," Shin, through an interpreter, told reporters over dinner last Thursday.

"They were the best at that time.

They were perfect on individual skills, technical skills and movements. They had a very good system. Now, it's more on individual skills. Sportsmanship is becoming more important. But you don't get five points even if you make a

Shin: Perfect jumpshot

good shot or a block. It's still just two points. Hopefully bigger teamwork, which is more important."

Asia former Eurasia team-mate Shin witnessed the best of times in Philippine basketball. As it does, he would be lead bonus with the famously perfected jumpshot versus the domineering Filipino big men of his era.

Now, for reasons among his career highlights, the 1969 Asian Basketball Confederation championship in Bangkok where he shot 49 points to lift South Korea to a stinging 95-86 triumph that ended the Philippines' reign.

"If your I'm reborn again, I'd like to be super player here in the Philippines," said Shin, who invited Melencio, Webb, Jaworski and Melbourne's coach Robert Jaworski, Sonny Co and Webb to the promotional activities of Ignasse 21, a five-building residential complex in Central Avenue, Quezon City.

"From 1970 to 1974, I received many proposals and I regret now that I didn't take them," added Shin. "But at that time, our rules are very strict. Some nations. If you transfer to another team or another country, people will think that you're a traitor."

Shin said he will take a lot of work to bring the old basketball glory days back to the Philippines and Korea.

"What's happening in the Philippines is the same thing that's happening in Korea," said Shin, who now serves as vice president of the Korean Basketball Association. "When the professional leagues started, players' prize money was our national pride. There must be change in attitude."

Southwoods hosts seniors golf tournament

THE BIBLE SOUTHWOODS GOLF and Country Club Seniors Cruzon' headed by president Bienvenido and vice president and tournament chair Pepe Gonzalez will host the first Mass to Southwoods Seniors Invitational from Feb. 10-11 in Carmona, Cavite.

This unique format, featuring five clubs-nine members and two senior guest partners, was conceptualized in an effort to promote camaraderie and bonding amongst the Southwood's senior members.

"The seniors would now have an event to call their own. I think that this is the first time that a golf club will do such an endeavor," Gonzalez said.

Executive said he expects around 200 golfers to take part in the two-day affair which has Karl Place as presenter and Boracay Sands Hotel, Coca-Cola Bottlers Phils., Dito Development & Industrial Corp., B-Bio Corp./Bravo Golf Fairways, and Bienvenido and Trudy Projection major sponsors.

Event promoters feel Place is a challenge Carmona golf course for the Masters and Legends tournament as both are nine-point Another par, also a formula, will be different as a major suffer from

Pacquiao will let his fists do the talking

By Ray Lustre

MANNY PACQUIAO AS ADMITS, SE-fusion vs Ian Barrera into a state of words with Ricky Hatton.

The Filipino ring superstar would rather let his fighting do the talking when he faces Barrera for the British boxer's IBO light welterweight title on May 2 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, Nevada.

"Let's just see what happens in the ring," said Pacquiao, who's asked by Filipino sportswriters for comment on Hatton's taunt on Thursday in Manchester, England, that he's unbeatable at 140 lb.

"He can say what he wants, I'll just give it my best," said the Filipino, who is coming off an eight-round demolition of Oscar De La Hoya.

Admitting that Hatton will be a tougher foe, Pacquiao feared Friday night that he'll be leaving on Feb. 24 for the United Kingdom to begin training at Freddie Roach's Wild Card Gym in Hollywood.

Pacquiao added he'll unveil the christening of his daughter, Queen Elizabeth, on Feb. 22 in Gen. Santos City before beginning his preparations for the magnificent bout that will include a promotional tour of key cities in Britain and the United States.

Ironically, Barrera made his name dealt by Floyd Mayweather Jr. in 147 lb in May, 2007. Jaworski is begin training two weeks earlier after taking his family to a Caribbean cruise.

According to Barrera, he won't let his countrymen down a second time by beating Pacquiao and claiming the Filipino's world's best pound-for-pound fighter label.

Sunday SPORTS

ALASKA Dillinger and star Talk 'N Text Tropang Texters try to get out of a 0-2 jam against Sonny Thoss (left), Reynel Hugnatan (right) and the rest of the Alaska Aces. NOEL TORRES

TNT tries to worm out of 0-2 hole vs Alaska

By Marc[illegible] R. Castillo

CHOT REYES DOESN'T BELIEVE THAT HE needs to prove the point but he's about to.

In fact, he's just down a single point in his Talk 'N Text crew to get back in the series.

"What we need to do is just have a balance of playing with a sense of urgency while keeping our focus," Reyes told the beaten yesterday after practice. "It's never time to press the panic button because we might really panic in the process."

"We need to be able to negate Alaska's edge in endgame poise and execution," he said. "In the semifinals (against San Miguel), I thought [illegible] about would win it for us. But not against this dimbo team."

Reyes tries to steer his Tropang Texters [illegible] Series to a Game 5 [illegible] Alaska in the [illegible] Cup at the Araneta Coliseum at 6 tonight, hoping that his main gun will finally be able to find their mark.

"We need to get Jimmy (Alapag) and Mac (Cardona) shooting well," Reyes said while pointing out to the two guards' combined 7-of-40 shooting from three-point range in the first two games of the series.

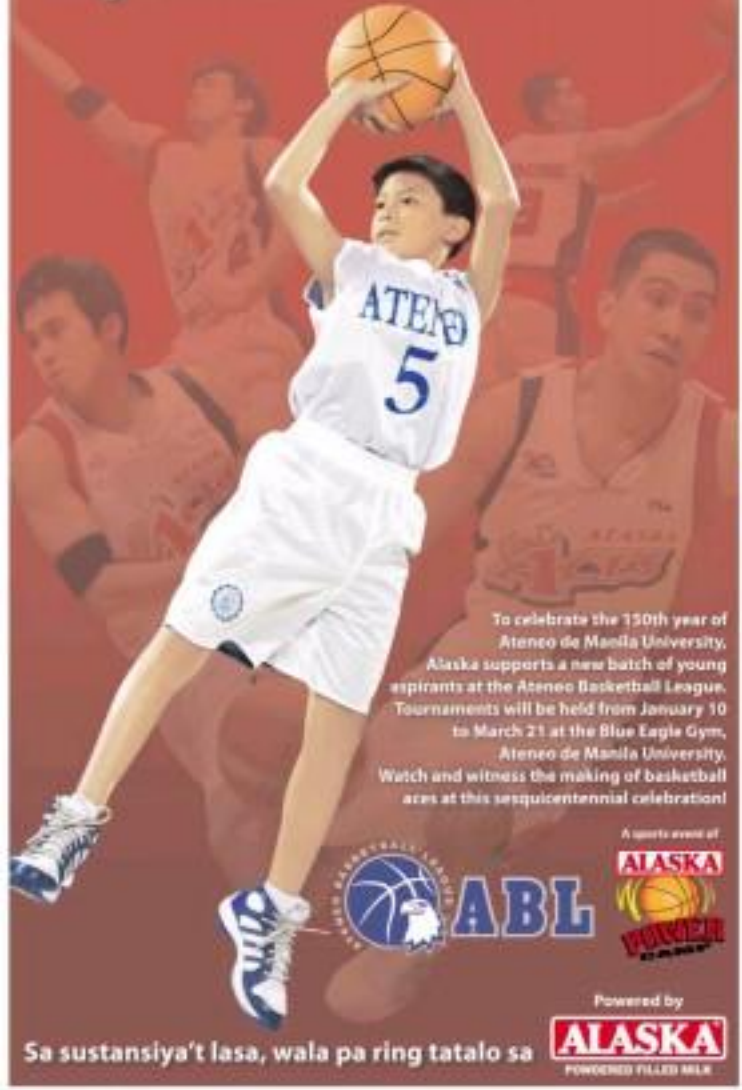
"It's hard to win with that kind of shooting," he stressed. "If you can recall, in Game 6 against San Miguel, Jimmy and Mac also were three-pointers each. And that was in just one game. Then both have also seven in two games. It's destructive."

That would probably be a tribute to how well the Aces have played Alapag and Cardona on defense, assigning different men on several occasions to give them different looks and feel.

The defense of the Aces has held down the Texters to just 93.5 points a contest, a far cry from the form they displayed in the Final Four, where they scored just the 106-point mark in each of the six games against the Elasmen.

MORE TODAY
Ateneo, Cebuana
Eye it...Rivals
on Talk 'N Text

Batang Alaska ngayon, superstar bukas.



To celebrate the 150th year of Ateneo de Manila University, Alaska supports a new batch of young aspirants at the Ateneo Basketball League. Tournaments will be held from January 10 to March 21 at the Blue Eagle Gym, Ateneo de Manila University. Watch and witness the making of basketball aces at this sesquicentennial celebration!

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Buddies, Stallions dispute Liga Ilocos crown

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN LIGA FILIPINAS history, the M. Distiller-Cebu Stallions failed to make a big championship game after the defending National Champions fell to the Green Pampanga Buddies, 98-94, in Step Three of the Season Six Leg of the Senior Hermogenes People's Center.

The thriller was arranged a one-game showdown with the undefeated Pasig-Laguna Stallions, 83-69 victors in the main game against the Iron Rods that Brotherhood, for a 2009 Inland Liga Filipinas Conference II leg crown.

The Buddies under Coach Allan Gregorio finished with a 2-1 win-loss record while the Stallions of Michel Distiller and Coach Rhett Alcantara dropped to 1-2.

Khiel Mita, whose parents are originally from Cebu, hit a lethal three-pointer with less than 30 seconds left in the contest that gave the Buddies an 86-83 lead.

SPORTSWATCH

La Salle holds badminton tilt

THE DE LA SALLE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION (DLSAA) will hold a Don La Salle Badminton Tournament subtitled "Totally Smashed—Pwro'on Na, La Salle!" on Feb. 28 at the Father Wenceslao Trinidad Gymnasium (FWTG) La Salle-Green Hills, Mandaluyong City.

Entry fee is P800 per person or P1,600 per pair. Organizers will accept only 100-200 pre-qualified players. The tournament is presented by Smartmatic-TIM Card. Registration form is available at www.dlsaa.com and facts: 5240000 or e-mail to [illegible]. Deadline of entries is Feb. 21.

For details, call 5250011/09154472524 or 0908-2308191.

Arellano bags high school plum

ARELLANO UNIVERSITY UNLEASHED A RUSH from [illegible] to hammer Pope Technological U, 80-65, and bag the National Capital Region Athletic Association high school trophy for the third straight time at the TIP Canal Gym.

Kim Papayanan, Jose Lojo and Ashen Sagrid combined in that pivotal run as the Baby Chiefs sealed the best-of-three series, two games to one.

The versatile Papayanan paced the Legends-turned-school with 20 points.

"We were challenged because we were expecting to sweep the series," said Arellano coach Cresencio Miljal.

RACING TIPS

By Top Choice
Al Gen Lucero LF

Aplus METRO
Editor Abelardo S. Ulandey

Special love for special kids

On the Day of Hearts, Camp Pag-Ibig is one sure way of showing we care

MORE than 2,000 special kids, like the one above in last year's Camp Pag-Ibig, are expected to join this year's outdoor activity.

By Julie M. Aurelio

ON FEB. 14, VALENTINE'S DAY, SPECIAL AND disabled children will have a fill of the special love they deserve through an outdoor activity called Camp Pag-Ibig.

To be held at a portion of the Bataan water plant in Quezon City, the camp will enable these children to romp and play on some rides of game groups, frolic in a clean pool, join games, or learn arts and crafts that can help them slowly come out of their shell.

Camp director and city councilor Jorge Banal said the special kids' camp was first organized 16 years ago as another way of celebrating the Day of Hearts more meaningfully.

"This is the first time in many years that the camp day will be held on the 14th. Before, we used to hold the camp during a weekend in February," he said in an interview.

Joint project

The weekend camping is a joint project of the city government, the Department of Education, the Manila Water Company Inc., the QC Capitol Aquaves and the Philippine Association for the Retarded.

For two days starting on the morning of Feb. 14, around 2,000 special kids will be treated to fun and games, arts and crafts, dance and music, swimming, nature exploration, and a lot more.

Dr. Yolinda Isidoro, Capitol assistant secretary for programs, said the camp is not only meant to let the special children enjoy the weekend with their parents.

"It's also meant to help them raise esteem and integrate them in the mainstream by letting them mix with other children," she explained.

Isidoro noted that among the various activities offered at the camp, the kids seem to enjoy swimming the most as they are free to frolic in the water while being aided by their parents.

"Before, a mom asked us if we could just let her child play in the pool because he was really enjoying it. So we went on with the other activities," she laughed.

On another occasion, a child who has no upper limbs proved to be a natural in fine arts, using his feet to paint a piece of art.

Special children, and those with physical or mental disabilities, are welcome to join Camp Pag-Ibig along with their parents, Isidoro said.

"The parents also need to know that there are agencies and groups which support their causes. They can talk to other parents and learn others' coping techniques, and what can be done," she added.

More than offering a support group for parents coping with a special child, the camp aims to lessen the stigma that society has associated with special and disabled children.

Tina Bautista of the city government's social services and development department noted that in the past, people were less aware and sensitive to the plight of special kids.

More aware

"Dati, iniisolate nila ng mga kaibi, ikinahihiya nila ng pamilya nila. But that is not true anymore ang mga na because ngayon nga have been advocating this more in recent years," Mariano said.

Banal recalled an incident when he attended the wake of a special child who died after being hit in the eye of a pool ball.

He said the child's mother gave away the special kid's last shoe and refused to care for the child, even to death.

"The sister told us that she tried calling the child's mother when the kid died, but the mom would not take her calls. Being poor is not an excuse to give away your child," Banal said.

Isidoro said Camp Pag-Ibig aims to help remove this attitude from some parents through tolerance and time.

She said the parents are generally supportive of the activities and that some even actively volunteer to help out during the camping. "For poor parents, it's not hopeless. There are many things that a parent can do for a special child. They must accept and love the child as he or she was born. That's the best thing," she stressed.

Dr. Yolinda Isidoro, one of the camp's pioneers, agreed and said the end goal is to have the children eventually assimilated to a mainstream school, among other children.

"I believe there is nothing unequal about the equal treatment of unequals. Whether the parent is rich or poor, (you) just or [illegible]," she added.

Some special children, Mariano related, have gone on to college and even found jobs, proof that nothing is impossible with love and support.

But in other cases, special children sometimes stay at a standstill, always needing their parents or teachers to help them get by each day.

Mariano recalled the case of a 40-plus parmigmat, Eugene, who has the body of a grown man but the mental age of a 12-year-old. "It's really obvious, he can't talk normally, he needs help at times. But he still struggles to learn and comes to the camp each year," she said.

For Banal, a special circumstance like having a special or disabled child under one's care showcases the power of a family's love no matter all difficulties. As someone here is not different.

"The important thing is a family's love. Hahamunahin mo ang lahat. Wala nanang hiyad ang pagmamahal. (You can set aside everything. Love, after all, is true)," he said.

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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2009

"Of the more than 3 million OFWs, 1.62 million are irregular migrants and are vulnerable to the actions of traffickers. 80 percent are women. 75 percent trained only primary/high school."

LOREN LEGARDA, December 2008

GLOBAL Pinoy

Editor George Lipio

E-mail to: global_pinoy@inquirer.com.ph

Read our global headlines!

This section is dedicated to Filipinos overseas toiling on land and at sea, in factories, in construction sites and in the homes of the world to secure a better life for their families. These are their stories.

LETTER FROM TAIWAN

Who's got the last laugh now?

By Erika Pilar Sauler

NINETY-TWO and a friend, both Filipino scholars in Taiwan, were sitting inside an elevator packed with professors and students of Kainan University (KSU) when they heard a Taiwanese say in Mandarin, "Filipinos have no money" and the rest of the people laughed.

In fluent Mandarin, Shoshy politely replied, "Thank you. I understood that" and let an uncomfortable silence followed.

Whereas other international students struggle with language difficulties, Shoshy, one of the first batch of scholars under a joint undergraduate program between Manila International and Taiwan's KSU, found himself confronted with bigger obstacles—stereotyping and discrimination.

"I felt discouraged because I thought then that whatever I do, I would not be taken seriously as an academic and thinker," Shoshy told the Inquirer in an e-mail interview.

Handpicked for MET

Nine years, however, Shoshy proved to be one of the best students in KSU. He had spent a semester at the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology—hosting hundreds of Taiwanese and international students who applied for the slot. He had just finished his three-month summer internship at Deutsche Bahn (German Rail) in Berlin and would start the school year—his fourth and last—as president of a popular student group, International Culture Organization.

"This is no normal résumé. Answering your questions makes me kind of emotional because looking back at what has happened last summer, I can't believe how blessed I am to be given all these," he said.

The opportunity to obtain a degree abroad was a dream come true for Shoshy. It was in 2001 when Shoss graduated from some of the top high schools in the country—Philippine Science High School, Quezon City Science High School and St. Jude Catholic School—and he was one of the last-minute students who got accepted.

Having studied in a Chinese school, Shoshy thought it was to his advantage that he was well-versed in Mandarin, which happens to be Taiwan's national language. It became a liability when he realized how the Taiwanese look at Filipinos.

Traumatized

"I don't want to sound like I am ranting against the Taiwanese society because I know some who are very friendly and non-racially discriminating. But I think Filipinos are thought of as 'poor,' 'blue-collar workers,' 'corrupt,' and 'low-class,'" he said.

At first, the Taiwanese were excited to meet the foreign students. But Shoshy and his fellows Filipino scholars noticed how the locals avoided to have last interest in them when they had said that they are from the Philippines, which was not the case for the foreign students from Europe, North America and select countries in Asia like Japan and Singapore.

"To be honest, at first, I was traumatized. I went to Taiwan as the youngest age of 17 with so much naivete and pride in representing the country as an international student," he said.

Problem is racism

But Shoshy did not let the occasional discriminatory remarks pull him down. He took to heart the advice of Mario Director Mrs. Isabel Gonzalez, who states these issues come to pass, so, approach the situation with a mind and positive disposition and to conduct themselves as responsible, amiable and educated individuals.

"I changed my perspective toward things," he said. "I told myself that the problem is not with me or with the economic situation of my country. The problem is with the lack of education and understanding in the values system of people who discriminate by race."

The encouraging inspired Shoshy, his best friend and fellow Filipino-Jeremy Ching, and Taiwanese Jerry Chen to form a student group which aims to eradicate discrimination and encourage the foreign students in Taiwanese society. That was born the International Culture Organization.

International Week

Just 13 days after its launch (on August 2008), ICO was given the Most Popular Award by KSU. Reporters Linda Yellow Taiwan News, China Times and United Daily News like Inquirer's reporter here in Taiwan, according to Shoshy's close friend. The organization's most popular activity, the International Culture Week Festival—a three-day event wherein booths representing countries were set up in effort to disprove stereotypes, food, games and performances.

Taiwanese and international students had a taste of Philippine delicacies like fruit salad and mango juice. They also took turns playing bamboo patintik, a typical Filipino activity on birthdays and fiestas where one tries to hit the clay pot while blindfolded.

Shoshy, then vice president for external affairs, appeared on television and sang a Taiwanese song to promote the activity.

"But I don't speak Taiwanese. I sang the song to impress them," he said. "It was a coincidence that the producers found out that I spent time at MIT so they also asked me to promote the partnership (between KSU and MIT) because MIT in Taiwan's a pretty big deal."

The KSU Office of International Programs and Services ordered emails to host and brighten students to partner in affiliation abroad. From the hundreds of applicants, Shoshy became one of the 17 candidates for international scholarship. He then had to campaign for the one slot who will be sent to MIT. Then interviews, examinations score and recommendation were sent to MIT for preliminary evaluation. Only five were considered for interview and Shoshy was the only undergraduate student among them.

Inspiration from parents

Throughout his endeavors, Shoshy drew inspiration from his parents. His mother Bernadette is a social science professor at Philippine Normal University and his father Nestor is a businessman with a degree in architecture, both of whom have instilled in him the value of education.

"They have always reminded me to study hard and do well in school. Their hard work and love for the family inspired me to do the best I could so I can gratefully return the enormous favor they have given me like early on," he said.

He also admires Filipinos who, by being the best in the world in their respective fields, bring honor, glory and respect to the country.

Shoshy said his internship, aside from applying what he had learned and learning further as a business analyst, he was able to travel to several cities in Europe—Hamburg and Frankfurt in Germany; Helsingborg, Sweden; Oslo and Moss in Finnmark, Italy; Prague, Czech Republic; and Copenhagen, Denmark.

He was joined in Paris visited Karl Marx's birthplace, the van the Jesse inspired Shakespeare's "Hamlet" and the Colosseum in Rome. He attended UN presidential candidate Barack Obama's speech at the Victory Column in Berlin.

Lifting image of Filipinos

Shoshy's achievements and NGO activities promoting cultural awareness, which are well-published in KSU publications, helped in uplifting the image of Filipinos and other residents in Southeast Asia.

"We do not bear discrimination's remarks anymore. And some of my friends from South and Asia told me they now get more invites to parties and events."

"I have one more year at the university and I will try my best to spread the message of intercultural understanding not only within the four corners of the university but outside as well," Shoshy said. "I might also consider a career in international relations in the future."

ONE (SECOND from left) and other international students at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Why losing one's job spells immigration trouble

JOSE AND GISELE, A MARRIED couple from Manila, gave up their promising careers to work for a US company. Two years ago, they arrived in the US on H1B visas and were offered to be petitioned for green cards if they continue to work for this company.

Recently, their employer notified them that they were losing investment and that no green card petition would be filed on their behalf. Jose sought legal advice on whether finding a new US employer would help him maintain his H1B status and stay in the US. He wants to know his options.

The beginning of this week was a bloody Monday where 52,000 US workers were reportedly terminated from their jobs in just one day. This means can still be expected in the coming days.

Generally, immigrant workers occupy mostly highly-skilled occupations in the field of medicine, engineering, the physical sciences, health care, computers and mathematics. There are also foreign-established workers in the field of construction, building and maintenance and agriculture.

We see Filipino workers in the various different fields mentioned but more especially in health services but there are a number of them who are working with temporary working visas.

All sectors of the society have been affected by the US crisis.

Those recently granted immigrant visas are now joining the significant number of terminated employees who are looking for jobs. Unemployment in the US rose to 7.2 percent and dropped 2.59 million jobs since the recession in December 2007.

The greatest setback of those who are immigrants may find it difficult to search for jobs when most industries are reducing labor costs and terminating employees.

However, their predicament is not as worse as two other categories of foreign workers. These are the workers who have pending applications for adjustment of status based on the petitions by their US workers and those who are in the US on temporary working visas.

IMFO

Lourdes Santos Tancinco

Work-based petitions

Green card may be obtained either through family or employment petition. In family petition, as long as the petitioner is a US citizen or lawful permanent resident with the financial ability to execute an Affidavit of Support for the beneficiary, the financial crisis has little effect on him.

For those who are facing petitioned by US employers, there is a distinct scenario. If the US employer who initially filed a petition for green card for a foreign worker terminates the petitioned employee, serious consequences can occur.

The petitioned employee needs to find a new employer under the same terms and conditions as s/he was petitioned in order to remain in lawful status.

And this has to occur six months after the petition and adjustment is filed. In other words, s/he will qualify under the portability provision of the American Competitiveness Act of the 21st Century. Otherwise, if the application is pending for less than six months and the US employer decides to withdraw its petition, the petitioned employee shall fall out of status.

Filipino workers who are holders of H1B or temporary working visas will lose their status if they are terminated. The H1B visa is, by nature an employment-specific type of visa. There is no immediate transfer of visa petition and that a new visa petition must be filed if the H1B visa holder is terminated.

During these difficult times for employers, the H1B visa holders are usually given only a few days notice before they are actually terminated. This means that they are not afforded sufficient time to find new employment to maintain their lawful nonimmigrant status.

No work, no visa

Both employment-based immigrant and non-immigrant working visa holders are definitely going to lose status if they do not find substitute employment. So much so, that there is an economic downturn now even if we have success to become optimistic. With everyday areas of economic disaster, the immigrant workers are left with harsh decisions.

There are H1B visa holders who will take their employment for so long a one may ticket back to the Philippines to avoid being branded as "TNT" and must stay with their lives in the homeland.

Many of those are encouraged to decided to take the leap to unemployment and wait for the legal status at immigration efforts to be adopted by the Obama administration. Such individual decides based on his specific circumstances. Sometimes the choice made is clearly clearer left for the Filipino worker.

Unless there are genuine government programs open for increasing overseas Filipino workers, they will be compelled to look for other options if not in the US, then in other countries. So readiness as they may go, they are likewise ready to look it down and work harder.

Questions may be routed at lawfirm@tancinco.com or at 897-7177).

SALMONELLA SCARE

US peanut butter firm under criminal probe

WASHINGTON—THE US Justice Department and the government's food industry regulator on Friday launched a criminal inquiry of a firm whose peanut butter products are at the heart of a salmonella scare that has made 500 people sick, an official said.

US Food and Drug Administration spokesperson Michael Herndon confirmed that the FDA and Justice opened the investigation into the production and distribution of products from the Peanut Corp. of America (PCA), a bulk peanut processor.

Ordinarily the FDA would not mention such an inquiry as it was being carried out.

But members of the US Congress on Friday demanded that probe in the wake of one of the largest food recalls in US history and the deaths of eight people which the Centers for Disease Control said may be linked to salmonella infection.

Senate Judiciary Committee chair Patrick Leahy and House Agriculture FDA subcommittee chair Rosa DeLauro called for the inquiry after an FDA report released on Wednesday said PCA knowingly shipped products contaminated with salmonella.

The report also said the FDA discovered contamination and mediocre facilities at the company's plant in Blakely, Georgia.

"It is clear that the behavior of the Peanut Corp. of America was egregious—harming hundreds of Americans and endangering thousands more," Leahy and DeLauro wrote.

"If crimes were committed, those responsible must be identified and held accountable."

In mid-January PCA issued a voluntary recall of goods such as cookies and cereals made with its nuts from the Blakely plant.

A broader voluntary recall of the company's products from that plant dating back to Jan. 1, 2007, has been called, the FDA said.

FDA officials did not immediately say how many products were affected by the broader recall in addition to the 400 already listed.

The company does not sell directly to consumers, but rather to processors who use the nuts in their own products.

The salmonella outbreak took place between Sept. 1 and Jan. 9, with 501 people infected in 43 states and one more person reported ill in Canada, according to the CDC.

Half of the illnesses were among children under 10.

The peanut products were distributed to US companies as well as others to Canada, Haiti, South Korea and Trinidad. AFP

S. Korea heightens readiness after North scraps pacts

SEOUL—SOUTH KOREA BOLSTERED its military readiness and mind to figure out North Korea's intentions on Friday after the North declared that it was scrapping the agreements both countries have signed to ease military and political tensions on the divided peninsula.

North Korea's decision followed a recent series of sharp statements and aggressive gestures that officials and analysts in Seoul said were aimed at gaining the attention of the new American administration and reinvigorating Kim Jong-Il's leadership hold of North Korea.

"Relations between the North and South have increased to the point where there is no way or hope of recovering them," said a statement on Friday from the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea, the North Korean unit in charge of relations with the South.

If South Korean Navy destroyer has sailed into waters near the disputed western sea border with North Korea—the scene of naval skirmishes in 1999 and 2002—to bolster defenses there, the national South Korean news agency Yonhap reported on Friday, without citing sources. "What we can say is that we are investing up our readiness," a South Korean military spokesperson, who spoke on the customary condition of anonymity, said while declining to confirm the Yonhap report.

Since the 1970s, the two Koreas have signed a series of agreements for nonaggression, which the North's Communist government has flouted repeatedly, rendering the pacts little more than symbolic. Still, this was the first time that North Korea said that it was officially nullifying the accords.

Lee, the South Korean president, predicted that dialogue with North Korea would resume "before long." For some analysts said that the chances were rising of North Korea possibly enacting a limited border skirmish to press its points. AFP

EXTERMINATION BY GUN

Photo provided by Paris' Holocaust Memorial shows a German soldier shooting an Ukrainian Jew during a mass execution in Vinnitsa, Ukraine, between 1941 and 1942. For decades, the Holocaust was epitomized by barbed-wire fences, gas chambers and death camps, and amply documented. But the extermination of over 3 million Eastern European Jews by guns in quiet villages and towns across Ukraine, Russia and Belarus has been underresearched and the victims have largely been forgotten.

US high court seems set to revise rules of evidence

WASHINGTON—IN 1983, A YOUNG lawyer in the Reagan White House was hard at work on what he called in a memorandum "the campaign to amend or abolish the exclusionary rule"—the principle that evidence obtained by police misconduct cannot be used against a defendant.

The attacks on the exclusionary rule never gained much traction. But that young lawyer, John G. Roberts Jr., is chief justice of the United States.

This month, Roberts, writing for the majority in Herring v. United States, a 5-4 decision, took aim at the Warren Court's landmark 1961 decision applying the exclusionary rule to the states. Roberts' majority opinion established for the first time that unlawful police conduct should not require the suppression of evidence if all that was involved was isolated carelessness. That was a significant step in itself. More important yet, it suggested that the exclusionary rule itself might be at risk.

The Herring decision "bumped a firewall," said Kent Scheidegger, the general counsel of the Criminal Justice Legal Foundation, a victims' rights group. "I think Herring may be setting the stage for the Holy Grail," he wrote on the group's blog, referring to the overruling of Mapp v. Ohio , the 1961 Warren Court decision.

Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr., who succeeded Justice Sandra Day O'Connor in 2006, joined the Herring decision and has been a reliable vote for narrowing the protections afforded criminal defendants.

"With Alito's replacement of O'Connor," said Craig Green, a law professor at Indiana University, "today's majority may have four votes for now and possibly five for the elimination of the exclusionary rule." AFP

British police eye probe of Lords MPs

LONDON—(BRITISH POLICE are reviewing material related to allegations that four members of the House of Lords offered to change laws in exchange for cash, House leader Lord Royall said on Thursday.

Royall revealed that the police "are not investigating the matter at this stage," but were responding to a request from the Liberal Democrat Party to consider starting a probe if there was sufficient evidence.

"The police are reviewing the material in relation to the allegations to decide whether such an investigation would be appropriate," Royall said in a statement.

The police said in a statement that Assistant Commissioner John Yates has met with Royall to "inform her of the position." Yates led the investigation into the so-called "cash for honors" inquiry that overshadowed the end of Tony Blair's premiership.

On that occasion the Labour government was accused of soliciting loans from wealthy supporters in return for peerages.

However, prosecutors announced in July 2007 that no one would face any charges.

Sun Labour peers were accused this week by the Sunday Times newspaper of offering to amend laws in return for as much as 120,000 pounds ($167,000), putting the reputation of the House as an independent revising chamber on the line.

Reporters from the newspaper posed as lobbyists representing a fake Hong Kong businessman who wanted a tax law altered.

The affair has sent tremors through the Lords, and Royall said on Monday that the rules on punishment for errant peers were not tough enough and ordered a review.

A common depiction of the Lords is of old men, barely conscious, slumped on the plush red benches of the gilded chamber as the nation's laws meander through, less recent changes to its composition have made it more combative, say experts. Reuters

Republicans pick African-American to lead party

STEELE

WASHINGTON—THE REPUBLican National Committee chose Michael Steele, an African-American ex-party chair on Friday, putting a new face on a beleaguered party as it seeks the right message to take on President Barack Obama and an overwhelmingly Democratic Congress.

The election of Steele, a former lieutenant governor of Maryland, means that both major political parties are being led by African-Americans. Steele is the first black chair of his party, and his selection was particularly striking for Republicans, who have been criticized over the years for winning racial animosities in an effort to build political coalitions, particularly in the South. With Obama at the top of the Democratic Party ticket, Republicans were swamped by Democrats in the competition for black votes last November.

If history is any guide, Steele will be anything but a hybrid—the reason Bandanaway glorified, with Republicans out of the White House and their numbers reduced to Congress, the party has no dominant national figure.

Instead, Steele is likely to be, at least until the presidential race starts in two years, at the leading edge of his party as it makes its case against Obama. Indeed, many Republicans said they were drawn to Steele because of his deep public presence and television skills, and he made clear, from the moment he accepted the nomination after six rounds of voting that took up most of an afternoon, that he would move aggressively to take on the Democrats.

"It's time for something completely different and we're going to bring it to them," he said.

Offering a hint of the tone he would take as his party's spokesperson, Steele said that the Republican Party had been unfairly caricatured by Democrats "and the media" as racist and insensitive to the needs of ordinary Americans. "We've been stereotyped as a party that doesn't care, a party that is insensitive, a party that is unconcerned about minorities," he said, adding: "Nothing can be further from the truth. AFP

A calmer Iraq takes another try at electing representatives

A WOMAN shows her ink-stained finger to her father in a polling station in Karbala, 80 km southwest of Baghdad, on Jan. 31. AFP/File

BAGHDAD—ON SATURDAY Iraqis go to the polls again, to choose provincial representatives, in what many here believe will be a fairer and more widely contested election.

The results are expected to mirror many closely the relative strengths and strengths of Iraq's many ethnic and sectarian groups.

Four years ago, balloting took place in mostly all-consuming elections. It was further tainted by a flawed Arab boycott, which limited the number of voters and ballot makers alike.

This time around, the ballot will be crowded—14,429 candidates are competing for 440 seats—and the vote comes during Iraq's most peaceful period since the US invasion in 2003.

In all, more than 14 million voters are eligible to take part in the election for local councils in 14 of Iraq's 18 governorates. The balloting for the provincial councils, which are roughly the equivalent of state legislatures, is expected to control trends for December's national elections for Parliament.

On the eve of the vote, Iraq is at once fascinated by—and weary of—its democratic experiments. Polls show that three-quarters of people plan to cast ballots, but vote-buying appears to be widespread, rivals regularly tear up another's posters from walls, and sources have received death threats for running. At least five candidates have been killed and there have been many assassination attempts.

Among the many questions is whether the religious parties that now hold sway in Iraq will continue to dominate politics, despite widespread displeasure with what voters say are those parties' ineptitude and corruption.

Significant realignments of power are expected in several provinces won and north of Baghdad, which have majority Sunni populations, but where many Sunnis boycotted the 2005 vote.

In heavily Shiite southern Iraq, a majority of seats are expected to be divided between the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, which is the most influential religious Shiite party, and a coalition headed by Prime Minister Nouri Kamal al-Maliki's Dawa Party, which has taken a secular approach in campaigning.

The Sadrists, a third Shiite group, retain significant influence in southern Iraq and in Baghdad but are not competing as a political entity during the elections.

Iraqi and US military officials fear that some of the expected power shifts could ensure renewed instability and other clashes, as a runlive begin on Friday evening. Airports and borders were closed, and thousands of troops were guarding polling stations. AFP

The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Querol

Holocaust denier apologizes to Pope

VATICAN CITY—A BISHOP RECENTLY REHABILitated by Pope Benedict XVI has expressed regret to the Pontiff for the "distress and problems" he caused by denying the Holocaust. (See photo on Page A19).

In a letter to the Vatican, Bishop Richard Williamson, who recently denied in a TV interview that 6 million Jews were murdered during the Holocaust, called his remarks "imprudent."

The letter was posted on Friday on Williamson's personal blog and addressed to Cardinal Darío Castrillón Hoyos, who has been dealing with the rehabilitation of Williamson and other renegade bishops who had been excommunicated.

The Holocaust denial had outraged Jewish groups and many others. It was not immediately clear if Williamson's letter, which contained no apology for the content of his remarks, would ease that anger.

"Amidst the tremendous media storm stirred up by inquisitor remarks of mine on Swedish television, I beg of you to accept, only as is properly respectful, my sincere regret for having caused to yourself and to the Holy Father so much unnecessary distress and problems," Williamson wrote.

Papal spokesperson the Rev. Federico Lombardi said he had "nothing to say about this letter. Everyone can evaluate it as they see fit."

WILLIAMSON

Lombardi said he didn't know if the Pope or his confidant had seen it.

The bishop in the letter also offered the Pope his "sincere personal thanks" for lifting the excommunication.

The Vatican had imposed the Church's most severe discipline, excommunication, on Williamson and three other bishops 20 years ago because they had been elevated to bishop's rank by a renegade, ultraconservative prelate, the late Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre.

In his letter on the blog, Williamson promised to "offer a Mass" for Benedict and Cardinal Hoyos.

Earlier on Friday Israel's ambassador to the Holy See, Mordechay Lewy, said the Jewish state has good relations with the Vatican, despite the flap over Williamson's comments.

The four rehabilitated bishops, including to the ultraconservative Society of St. Pius X, which Lefebvre founded because he rejected the modernizing reforms of the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s.

On Wednesday, Benedict expressed what he called his unquestioned solidarity with Jews and issued a stern warning against any denial of the Full Horrors of the Nazi genocide.

In a letter dated on Thursday, some 50 Catholic members of the US Congress urged to Benedict to express their "deep concerns" over the Pope's decision to reinstate Williamson while the bishop was denying that the Holocaust occurred.

"We do not question your reasons for revoking the excommunication of Bishop Williamson or your right to do so, but we did so misinformed why the revocation was not accompanied by an emphatic public rejection of his denial of the Holocaust," the letter said.

The bishop's remarks about the Holocaust "echo those of neo-Nazis, Islamic extremists, racists and others who denounce hatred and violence over peaceful co-existence among peoples of all races and ethnicities," the lawmakers said, adding that they welcomed Benedict's expression of solidarity with the Jewish people.

Benedict visited Washington during a pilgrimage to the United States last spring. AP

US stimulus plan meets stiff resistance in Senate

WASHINGTON—SENATE REpublicans and even some Democrats are pressing for big changes to the $819 billion economic stimulus package the House passed this week, setting the stage for a brewing debate over tax cuts and spending that will test the Obama White House.

The demand for major changes comes amid mounting criticism from some economists that the bill does not focus tightly enough on government programs that will quickly create jobs or tax breaks that will spark spending by consumers and businesses.

Not a single Republican voted for the version of the bill that the Democratic-controlled House approved this week. But with the economy in grave trouble, some Senate Republicans clearly were to find a way to support the bill, and President Barack Obama wants a strong bipartisan vote to show his ability to build consensus.

Republicans and some prominent Democrats said they would push to add or expand initiatives to prop up the collapsed housing market, which was a major cause of the recession. Democratic leaders said they were open to the ideas, including a $15,000 tax credit for homebuyers.

Republicans said they would put forward numerous amendments, especially broader and deeper tax cuts, and efforts to strip out some major spending provisions that support long-term policy goals of Obama and congressional Democrats but may not provide a quick jolt to the economy.

The Republicans also said they intended to remove several provisions that they say smack of special-interest pet projects, including disaster insurance for honey producers.

At a strategy session on Thursday with Obama's top economic advisers Lawrence H. Summers, Democrats and the White House agreed to allow full debate on the stimulus in the Senate rather than try to pass the bill through with a small margin of victory. At a minimum, Democrats need at least two Senate Republicans if they are to muster the 60 votes needed to preempt any filibuster.

Already the Senate version of the bill is substantially different from the House package, including a provision to protect millions of middle-class Americans from having to pay the alternative minimum tax in 2009, which brings the total cost of the Senate bill to nearly $890 billion. Reconciling the two versions will require further negotiations with House leaders after the Senate acts. Floor debate is expected to last through next week. AFP

RELEASED Prosecutors ruled on Friday that Pfizer beauty queen Lara Zuniga, 22, be released from house arrest after investigators in a drug kidnapping case turned up no evidence against her. Zuniga was detained on Dec. 22 after being caught in a vehicle that had a stash of weapons, ammunition and $61,000. She was later stripped of one of her crowns. REUTERS

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Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Bugaoi

Sunday BIZ

I am not sure whom I should credit for the best financial advice I have ever received, my father or Charles Dickens. My father urged me to read Charles Dickens' novel, David Copperfield, when I was 12 and I think should be everyone's guiding principle when it comes to their finances.

In the novel, fictional character Mr Micawber observed: "Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteen nineteen six, result happiness. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds ought and six, result misery sevenpence."

The Micawber test: spending six pence less than 20 pounds for happiness or six pence more than 20 pounds for misery. Simply put, don't spend more than you can afford.

Credit is an important financial tool. Having the ability to borrow funds at low or to grow our businesses or buy things we would otherwise have to save years to afford, such as houses, cars and education. But we need to remember that credit actually represents real money. And the abuse of credit can be dangerous, leading people into debt far beyond their ability to repay. That's why learning how to use credit wisely is one of the most valuable financial skills anyone can learn.

Mark Watkinson
President and CEO
HSBC

More words from the wise in troubled times

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao, Elizabeth Sanchez-Lucero and Doris C. Dumlao

IT IS EASY TO FEEL OVERwhelmed by all the negative developments on the economic front both here and abroad. News of massive layoffs, revised corporate losses and grim growth projections have become as much a part of breakfast as bread and coffee these days that it is no wonder that Filipinos fear for their future. This helps explain why people are starving for information they can actually use to help them cope with the crisis. So here's an extra helping of sound and valuable advice that experts themselves vouch to be effective to good times and in bad.

Have you ever known someone who "made a lot of money" yet never seemed to have anything, and lived paycheck to paycheck? And found yourself wondering, "What do they do wrong?" Well, the answer lies in some basic human truths. Human desires are never satisfied. First you want a small flat. Then a bigger one. And then a house. It never ends! And apparently humans by nature avoid discipline. We know it is important, and we all claim to "be disciplined" but in reality, we don't like it, and we avoid it when we can.

Put these two together, and you can have lots of people who earn quite well, yet with nothing to show for it.

It is with this backdrop I got the greatest gift I could have ever received, from a former boss. A piece of simple wisdom I have passed on to countless hundreds of people who have worked for me.

The year was 1986, and I was into my first "real job" post college, working in marketing at Procter and Gamble in my US headquarters in Cincinnati. My boss, a great man by the name of Tom Handley, brought me into his office to give me my first raise, a nice one (in those days) of $4,000 a year. I was elated and over the moon, and already planning to take my wife out for a celebratory dinner that night! It was at that point, Tom gave me some sage advice. I can still see this day, 23 years later, how it saved me $4,000 a year.

Tom, you will see many people in your life who earn much and have nothing to show for it. As soon as they get a raise, they blow it all and find out they have nothing and then end up working for the next raise to make things right, and then they blow that too. And over the years, they find ways to spend every increase they earn and never can save up or invest properly.

"There are many more times where this came from. You will get many. My advice is simple, and I will say it only once, as it is your life and your money. Save half of every raise you get. Call your investments advisor and stick half of it into stocks and mutual investments. Take the other half and spend it on you and your family. If you do this over a 35- or 40-year career, you will amass a fortune and you won't even notice."

I took my raise. I spent $2,000 and gave $2,000 to my investment advisor. I have followed this advice

More words from the wise in troubled times

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for 23 straight years, through all of the promotions, and while I don't have the future yet, I have saved well above the average.

It was great advice because it was given pacing, when the power of time (and compounding interest) is on your side. I can't count the number of young people I have given the same speech to. We all have an obligation to share wisdom like this. And each person is free to choose whether they accept it, or not.

Jim Lafferty
President & general manager
PBA Philippines

"Don't be impressed by appearances or frame — validate the substance."

I got this from my Jr. unit mentor in college which eventually became organized to me all throughout my professional life as a banker. This advice has helped me in profoundly carrying out varied duties and responsibilities and to also become a well-rounded professional.

Jayne Hagedorn
Prime Commercial Bank president

As old friend from Singapore once told me that, in running a business, we must manage the monthly P&L (Profit & Loss) statement. What I've done is to give equal importance to the discipline of financial reporting and analysis, and people management. If my team believes the co-owners of the business, you don't really need to watch what they're doing. Thankfully we have a very professional organization at Prime, run by self-motivated individuals who value integrity as much as good financial management.

Lamberto Ulloa
President and CEO
Sterling Bank of Asia

My dad always used to tell me, invest in your own business. Though back money is your contingency instead of investing in real estate, stocks and other investments. Thus, I have limited exposure to the volatile market that has lost so many people (and I know

Mike Bilbao
Owner
Seconds

I never saw anybody getting poorer investing in bonds. In the long term, if you buy bonds or fixes, you will be safe. I get that advice from my father and it has helped me relax in times of financial turmoil.

Fernando Fernandez
Chair and CEO
Unilever Philippines

Never spend more than you earn, always live within your means. This is from my grandmother, a mother of six and wife of a Welsh coal miner. This helped me because I have no debt (other than a mortgage on our home) and have always saved (had debt in my life when ever my income level was in the time.

Ian Thornhurst
Chief operating officer
Holcim Phils

There is no unique financial advice or solution. The most important is the attitude and how you are prepared to face a crisis situation. My father, who headed major businesses companies, always said, "Keep focused on your mid/long term strategy and make sure that whatever decision you make, it keeps you on the right path to achieving it."

Wilbert Hamilton Hayes
General manager
Holcim Philippines

When you invest, always invest for the long term. As I get older and gain more experience, I begin to realize that only in long term investments, the business cycle multiplies much larger over time. It is also the only investment in shares—in any share energy, body is selling and hold for a long period, from five to 10 years, you can get a much bigger return than the speculators because over time, shares always go up, of course with blue chips only. And also, long term investment will avoid financial scams from happening.

Manny Ocampo
Chair
Hilton Cebu Resort and Spa

My parents' advice is to live simply. It's great because my happiness comes from family friends and shared experiences.

James F. Gaikongwat
All Seasons Holdings Inc.
President

In finding a stock to buy a stock as if you are investing in a house in a business with a clear, positive advantage and a management you can trust. Buy the stock at a reasonable price. If you find that stock, stick to it until the reason you bought changes. This is advice I've from Buffett and Charlie Munger helped me become it goes hand in hand with my trading strategy of letting profits run and cutting my losses as wrong.

Wilson L. Sy
Stock broker and vice chair
Asian Alliance Holdings Group

The best advice I received is from Mr. John Gokongwei in 1979 when I helped raise the financing for his purchase of the property from the Assumption nuns via a bond issue for DFC. Mr. John said, you must properly match the terms of your financing to the type of asset you wish to acquire. Since real estate is long term and illiquid, you must be able to cover external payments over a long period of time and in a variety of economic situations. We would not have the global crisis if subprime borrowers followed Mr. John's advice.

Manuel M. Dy Jr.
AIM Global Capital Partners
President and CEO

In 1987, I lost P80,000 in the stock market. It was my first "loss" and I got so depressed. I was told to always remember that the "first loss is always the cheapest." I heard this to be very true. I learned (the first time) the late Benny Gaberman, former president of the Makati Stock Exchange. His words remained to me a benchmark of wisdom and fair.

Bellington Lacuy
Chair and president
Jaguar Cars Inc.

My late father once told me to do my best and charge dearly because no customer will complain about a job well done. I followed his advice to a certain extent by doing my best. But instead of charging them dearly, I made my customers dear to me.

Antonio J. Aboitiz Jr.
Owner
Goldenhills Jewelry

From my late papa...earn from an honest day's work and live a simple life. Don't spend more than you earn. Save all days are money and you must save for the rainy days. Invest in the education of your children.

It's the only investment good and loss-free investment product ever conceived by man.

Francis Ed. Lim
CEO
Philippine Stock Exchange

Space and Tranquility at the Heart of NUVALI.

Ten minutes from NUVALI's hub is a clearing of calm,
where clouds pause for mountains and hills shape the sky,
where greenways stretch to greet a lake,
and the horizon extends your view of the world.
In this tranquility, the heart feels at home.
Here, it's not a living room. It's room for living.

Never let your income dictate your lifestyle. Always prioritize and put aside money for savings and investments before you allocate money for expenses. This came from my mom, Drusilla Arguelles Mendoza, and is the basis of the wealth management program I share with people everywhere.

Biz Mendoza
Senior vice president
Ayala Land Inc.

"Formal schooling and my banking experience have taught me the tools of finance: discounted cash flow, risk adjusted returns, NPV (net present value), optimal portfolio theory, etc. My boss' financial advice though is from my mother. She taught us and demonstrated that as assets/financial stability we should focus on things under our control like science, like savings building, less external chicanery & everybody could save. She showed us that savings should not be a residual amount after expenditures but a conscious decision we should always stick to. Recently I heard the best expression of what my mother has been teaching and preaching all these years from my chair, Jonathan Gotsis. He said the expenses should be income minus savings/capital instead of the opposite (other than what most of us usually do which is income minus expenses equals savings). I have tried to remember this concept in my business affairs, conserve cash and if you have to spend, make sure to cash flow positive/even rules.

Antonio Alberto Pujol Jr.
President
Zuzi Wire Bonds

When I was still in grade school, my mom would encourage me to save part of my baon so I could use it for something special. This was a basic lesson in saving and living within one's means.

Eduardo Francisco
President
ABS Capital and Investment Corp.

In the context of today's financial crisis, most investors are suffering losses in their portfolios or parts of their portfolios. It is difficult, therefore, to talk about excellent financial advice in short timeframes; investment returns have proven to be very volatile and performance ensures among different asset classes. The best advice one year ago may not have been the wisest three years ago.

So if you ask me today what is the best financial advice I received, then I would have to name from my parents when they told me to value my conscience. So far that is the investment that has generated the highest and sustainable returns.

Francis Jarvis
President
AB Capital and Investment Corp.

My personal experience during the Asian Financial Crisis, the Dot-com bubble and the current worldwide financial crisis is that there are no shortcuts, you either plan and work hard or it will succeed or you don't. If it's not good to be true it probably isn't. By following this advice, working hard and not taking any shortcuts, GlobeTel has grown to become the largest independent oil company in the Philippines today.

Glenn Yu
President and CEO
GLOBE

Actually, it wasn't a financial advice but I was very much impressed by my former boss's saying that 'execution and consummation of business is important, but what's more significant is once we start a business, be it service by taking every possible measure.'

Koji Takeda
President
Japan Philippines Corp.

Some of the best advice I ever got are the following: (1) live in a spirit of abundance (2) spend only what you have already earned, (3) invest in things that matter (and they are not changes), (4) live simply so that others may simply live.

These were guide me solving a full life and it got in trouble even in the daughters of jesus.

Stephen Allan
Country manager
Dun Cyanosa, Philippines

Spend less than what you earn. I learned this from experience. If you don't want to get broke, don't spend more than what you earn. I believe that this has helped me because I can say that I have been very blessed to have a comfortable and decent lifestyle of all. I have peace of mind.

Jose O. Lim Jr.
President
Mondo Meral

From my late angel (my father's side): "Don't spend the money you don't have if you want to keep out of trouble." This has proven to be very sound. I think the reason I have had a normal life without any health concerns people of my age complain about like high blood pressure is because I don't owe anyone any money I have not planned payment for. On the other hand, one of my MBA professors advised to "use other people's money" to get ahead. I did not find wisdom to it and the recent accounts of Bernard Higgins committing suicide for having squandered other people's money proves the fallacy of it.

Andrew Tiqueres
President and CEO
SEAM

Live within your means but enjoy the fruits of your labor. It's not how much you earn but how much you save. Spend only for your needs and prepare for your wants. Always keep your feet firmly on the ground.

My father, the late Aurelio Periquet Jr., gave me these words of advice 43 years ago—when doctors told him he had lung cancer and had a few months to live. He passed away six months later. I prove he wanted to make sure that I will be well supportive when he was gone.

I learned how to survive on my own and experience financial freedom no matter how difficult and challenging the times.

Anna Maria Periquet
Owner, Anna Maria Dance Studio

Reflecting on the past and the present, through the good times and the tough times, I would have to say that my mom's simple but wise and practical advice has served me well. Personally and in business.

She always said: Save for a rainy day—and make sure you are always financially independent. Saving for a rainy day really translates to the importance of frugality, particularly during challenging economic times like this ... and, as many financial advisers would say: Cash is King.

Being financially independent is what I find myself advising the younger generation nowadays ... for it does give you confidence and some respect from others. Besides, it is always nice to be able to do what you want, when you want to.

Anecdotha Wijesinghe
President
Rizzoni Recovery Hospitality Group

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Sunday BIZ

Saving the environment, and your baby's bottom

A man's love for his baby inspires environment-friendly diapers

PHIL FERNANDEZ hopes to soon get a bigger slice of the diaper market.

By Yolanda Sonio
Inquirer Northern Luzon

DAGUPAN CITY—A MAN'S love for his daughter inspired him to create diapers that are both baby- and environment-friendly.

"Our daughter Jenelle arrived after eight years of marriage," said Mel Fernandez, 38.

Naturally, the little girl, now 2, has become the apple of her father's eyes.

Fernandez confessed that he was a "hands-on dad," devoting more time on the job than his wife Susan.

Once, when Jenelle was 5 months old, she developed rashes on her bottom and pelvic areas, he recalls.

Fernandez said he got really worried because the little girl ran a fever due to the severity of her rashes.

Fernandez's sister, dermatologist Mary Gonzales, gave the "usual dermis solutions," like creams and others.

"The rashes would heal, but would recur again and again," he said.

CLOTH diapers in lump bubble-dry and the environment safe.

Gonzales later explained to Fernandez that the girl's bottom needed ventilation. The doctor also said the baby must only use cotton panties or shorts, not disposable diapers.

"But she needs diapers, especially at night," Fernandez said. "So, I remembered so what the doctor-sis could not see her, based on the principle that her sensitive skin needs air to prevent rashes."

There are cloth diapers in the local market, but these did not fit his daughter's needs. So Fernandez made a diaper shaped like disposable ones, pasting in pieces of cloth to absorb urine.

"I used an old sewing machine and even my hands [in designing the diaper]," he recalls. "I experimented with design, *para ang pangit* (ugly) that I did they turned out to be tipy[.]"

When Fernandez started using the crudely made cloth diapers, Jenelle's rashes disappeared.

"These few diapers have no commercial value at all," he says. "But they were no longer rashes, no more money from me buying the expensive disposable diapers."

Then the idea struck him: Why not manufacture cloth diapers?

"There must be a need for cloth diapers because nearly, there are parents out there whose babies have sensitive skin like Jenelle."

He also thought that the city was grappling with waste disposal problems, and that disposable diapers constituted a big percentage of solid wastes.

"Sometimes, I see floating diapers on the river (near my place) and I feel very bad," he said. "Besides, disposable diapers smell really awful."

So Fernandez improvised his design and showed samples to relatives and friends. He also gave diapers as gifts to people with babies.

The initial reactions were not encouraging, he said.

"Some asked, 'Mura ito, hindi halata' (not flimsy, don't cheat)? Pantalones?"

He would then start to explain to people what they were, as well as "their advantages over the disposable ones, and their negative effects on the environment."

"I also showed them how to put the diapers on their babies," he added.

At present, cotton diapers with different designs, fabric materials and sizes (from small to extra large) are manufactured at the backyard of the Fernandezes home.

The diapers comprise of three pieces: The cloth diaper, a soaker (all cotton) and a doubler (made of a special kind of absorbent fabric).

"It's still a backyard industry but we are planning to go full-blast," said Fernandez, a City Hall employee.

He also tapped his dermatologist sister as marketing agent, displaying the diapers in her clinic. There are also pediatrician friends in different hospitals in the city who help them in the marketing.

"In all term, the market is still BIG—Kiddiegen, Mommy-nouk, Babilala... but we hope to reach a wider clientele soon," Fernandez said.

He maintains an Internet site (zippydiapers.multiply.com) where customers can be placed.

He calls his creation Zippy Diapers—"the only breathable cloth diaper" that greatly helps "your baby and the environment."

The functional, natural-fibered diapers have "6-hour absorbent capacity and are perfect for day and night baby use, he said.

Zippy Depot can an average of 1500, depending on the design and materials, he said. In the long run, the diapers would prove to be more economical.

He said five pieces cost P1,300 and can be used for at least three months.

"Normally, at least four diapers are used daily costing P40 (P10 each). This means parents spend P1,680 for three months (90 days). This amount is a little more than half the price of regular diapers, he explained.

"It is less expensive, even if you factor in laundering costs," he added.

A leader's inner circle

A leader's potential is determined by those closest to him/her

A LEADER'S WAY

John C. Maxwell

MONTHS BEFORE PRESIDENT OBAMA took the oath of office, he began assembling an inner circle of advisors. He and his transition team painstakingly poured over the qualifications of candidates to identify the strongest leaders for cabinet posts.

In methodically vetting future leaders of his administration, President Obama demonstrated that he understands the law of the inner circle: A leader's potential is determined by those closest to him or her.

Past presidents have learned the hard way that failures of a leader's trusted advisers can bring disaster. During the Clinton administration, investigations into the conduct of Bev Lafalce's members eroded public perception of the President's judgment.

The indictments and allegations gave ammunition to Clinton's foes and cast doubts on his character, especially after the Monica Lewinsky scandal came to light.

Likewise, President George W. Bush faced embarrassment when the aims he appointed to head of Fema, Michael D. Brown, failed to provide strong federal leadership in the aftermath Hurricane Katrina. Inexperienced in emergency management, Brown was overwhelmed by the crisis.

Key questions

During the height of the disaster, he fervid about finding a dog sitter and fained about his attire. His incomprehension and inaction left the Bush Administration vulnerable to scathing accusations of neglect and indifference.

Five questions to ask when forming your inner circle:

1. Do you display exemplary character to everything they do?

Deception anywhere is a leadership event like cancer. Dishonesty on the part of one member of an inner circle can bring them and disaster to all. Enron organizations have toppled from the stablishelter of one bad apple.

2. Do they bring complementary gifts to the table?

Imbalance within an inner circle can increase a leader's one to strip one side of an argument. When putting together an inner circle, prioritize diversity of personality and perspective. By doing so, you widen the range of your vision and the breadth of your influence.

3. Do they hold a strategic position and have influence within the organization?

Members of the inner circle must have the platform and influence to implement a leader's decisions. If they cannot be relied upon to execute a chosen strategy then they shouldn't be entrusted with a spot on the leadership team.

In addition, inviting noninfluential advisors into the inner circle disrupts the political balance of an organization. High performers suffer a motivational blow when they see a less deserving colleague granted special access to top leadership.

4. Do they add value to the organization and to the leader?

When considering someone for the inner circle, you should be able to articulate clearly the value they will bring. Ask yourself the following questions: What will they bring into discussions? How do they have expertise? What unique skills can they be counted on to bring to the table?

5. Do they positively impact other members of the inner circle?

If you've ever inhabited a home with a feuding husband and wife, then you can understand the need for leaders to date proximity to get along, lollygoing may energy and focus from a senior leader, forcing him or her to mediate conflicts with time that could be better spent elsewhere. Differences of opinion signal healthy debate, but personal animosities destroy a leadership team. Make sure members of your inner circle have the emotional intelligence to keep arguments from becoming too personal.

We've looked at the questions to consider when gathering a team of trusted advisors. It's also like to offer thoughts on the cues signs you can fail into when forming their inner circle.

Two common errors in constructing the inner circle:

1. Soliciting praise instead of candor.

Handing an inner circle with flatters and "yes" men ranks among the foolish decisions you can make as a leader. Doing so robs you your perspective, exposes you to blind spots and leaves you on an island when do-or-die decisions must be made.

When picking members of your inner circle, be sure they have the gumption to voice dissent. You'll rely on them to question your assumptions, to focus you on the mission and to measure the integrity and worthiness of your ideas.

2. Inviting many talents so that your power isn't threatened.

The wisdom of accumulating a talented inner circle may seem intuitive, but a thing surprising threaten insecure leaders. Leaders should not be, and cannot be, the utmost authorities on all matters germane to the organization. Inevitably, people have weaknesses. What leaders *need* instead are teammates, and welcome takes to areas where they lack strength.

Summary

Questions to ask of candidates for your inner circle:

Do they display exemplary character to everything they do?

Do they bring complementary gifts to the table?

Do they hold a strategic position and have influence within the organization?

Do they add value to the organization and to the leader?

Do they positively impact other members of the inner circle?

Those to avoid when stuffing your inner circle:

Soliciting praise instead of candor.

Driving away talent so that your power isn't threatened.

(Attend John Maxwell's Developing The Leader Within You Workshop on Feb. 19-20, 2009 or the John Maxwell 14 Mod, which will be facilitated by Maxwell-certified trainer Patricia Bing. Call Inspire Intelligent Excellence at 687-2614 or 0917-851-1215. You can also e-mail info@inspiretophilippines.com. Visit www.inspiretophilippines.com to know more about other workshops.)

CANNES LIONS 2009 OPEN FOR ENTRIES

Entrant companies can now submit work to compete at the 56th Cannes Lions International Advertising Festival in all categories – Film, Press, Outdoor, Direct, Media, Cyber, Radio, Promo, Design, Titanium, Integrated and the new PR Lions category.

Entry forms can be completed online at www.canneslions.com.

DEADLINES

Film Lions Entries 6 March 2009	**Media Lions Entries** 13 March 2009
Press Lions Entries 6 March 2009	**PR Lions Entries** 13 March 2009
Outdoor Lions Entries 6 March 2009	**Promo Lions Entries** 13 March 2009
Design Lions Entries 13 March 2009	**Radio Lions Entries** 13 March 2009
Direct Lions Entries 13 March 2009	**Cyber Lions Entries** 20 March 2009

Titanium and Integrated Lions Entries 20 March 2009

In 2008, the Cannes Lions International Advertising Festival launched a new category: the PR Lions. It honors the creative use of reputation management by the building and preservation of trust and understanding between individuals, businesses or organizations and their publics.

Changes have also been introduced to the Integrated Lions with the inclusion of more trophies for Gold, Silver and Bronze awards. The Media, Direct, and Promo Lions also restructured its criteria and categories.

For further information about the entry changes and to register to attend the Festival, please go to www.canneslions.com. The Philippine Daily Inquirer is the Official Country Representative of the Cannes Lions Festival. You may also direct your queries through our Corporate Affairs office at (632) 987 8888 local 259.

Official Festival Representative

IN THIS ISSUE

- Lifestyle do's and don't's in hard-up times/E1
- Confessions of a 'serial lolo'/D2

Sunday LIFESTYLE

TOAST In a smiley session, Coca-Cola Export Corp. business unit president Randy Amord, Bench president Ben Chan, Coca-Cola Bottlers Phil. president and CEO David Lynn, Coke brand ambassador Kim Chiu, Eastwing Duo, Shaina Magdayao and yours truly

Wear purple in testy Year of the Ox

It is said that the lucky colors this year are green and purple. Since I'm not fond of purple, I thought that the color might work better as highlights in my hair

TESSA! Tessa Prieto-Valdes

HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS seem to be on running mode these days, from the festivities of New Year's to the festivals of Chinese New Year. Indeed, this new Year of the Ox will be a busy one for many and we all need to be laugh, relations and prepared to wish Santo this year.

At the Shangri-La Hotel, Makati Oriental's Chinese New Year celebration, Joseph Chow, a Singaporean, brought forth auspicious blessings that started with a Dragon Eye dancing Ceremony and ended in midnight. At the stroke of 12, a fireworks display cues of Enchanted Kingdom, lit up the Makati skyline for a full 12 minutes. The double 12 was especially lucky for one Manilenia guest, who won an HDC touch-screen phone courtesy of Smart Infinity.

World of Feng Shui Philippines owner Maritess Mina told me that the lucky colors this year are green and purple. I'm not fond of wearing purple, so I thought that the color might work better as highlights in my hair. I decided to ask Pio Antonio, the creative genius behind Salon de Manila. He has the precision cuts and colors to style our locks.

Pio's philosophy in beautifying people a to be as totally satisfied as the customers themselves. She won't stop working until she is happy with the outcome. Her celebrity clients include Gelli de Belen, Maricel Rodriguez, singer Erik Santos and Iyda, sporting a new, fresh angle to her hair. Sometimes it's hard to believe that Salon de Manila has been styling Pinoys for 25 years.

Of course, Pio also does makeup, including the latest airbrushing techniques that she learned from the Airbrush Institute of America. So next time out at Salon de Manila if you're looking for that ultra-chic makeup to match your ultra-stylish hair.

I just love the hair and makeup ceremony. For my second Chinese New Year party evening makeup artist Hilary Moran doled me up in chinoiserie style. She told me that airbrushing makes colors stay radiant throughout an entire evening. The On may

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MANDARIN Oriental Hotel GM Helmut Gelderager with hosts Sea Princess and TJ Manotoc

PHILIP Ranoadduc and Marie Prisse with Pilar and Jean-D'Med Manotoc

GRACIOUS friends of the Mandarin Rose Marie Arenas, Julie Yap Daza, Hesty Torrecos and Diana-Jean Lopez

MANDARIN Hotel PR/Head Charlene Chuidian and YTF guests Teddy and Louie Locsin

Wear purple in testy Year of the Ox

From page D1

FENG Shui buddies Joael Cuesa and designer wife Lulu Tan Gien, Patricia Ramos-Shahani and Richard Tia

HOET Hennessy's Olga Kaaresen and Anton Barreras

ELEGANT ladies Mary de Leon, Pixie Zarpa-D'Medi and Sea Princess

COUPLE Isabel Banzon-Baron and Jocelyn Rollins

MELO Cuenca, Anton Barreras, Chito Rueda and Martha Lorina

MAKEUP artist Missy Morse

CHAMPION billiards and poker player Mia Pagcaliwa and Philweb president Dennis Valdes

MASTER Joseph Chua at the eye-dotting ceremony with Smart-Infinity's Julie Carcellar

WORLD of Feng Shui Philippine owner Marilou Allen

MUSICAL play "Rizal" with actress Ayen Laurel

LOCAL couple Yvette and Marty Jugan

FENG Shui friends Gloria Diaz and Mike de Jesus

PARTY friends Maurice Arnaiz and Susan Javier

ASIAN Poker Tour organizer Chris Parker, Sea Princess, Rodney Hall and Silver Rallos

CORE cards guardians Kristel Marlene, Jubilee Rita, Christy Antolin, Ben Chan and Frina Dinsmedi

TOP 10 players at the Asia Poker Tour Celebrity at Dusit Hotel

Next stone heavenly luck on Feb 9th this year, but thanks to the right makeup, I've been telling positive energy.

Poker for a cause

In fact, I had fairly lucky with my all week. At the Asian Poker Tour at the Dusit Hotel, I joined the celebrity poker matches and made it to the final table. Unfortunately I didn't win anything for my charity, the Assumption Mission Schools, but organizer Chris Parker told me that he would support my charities in the future, so I am looking forward to that.

I just love working with big businessmen like Chris. Getting them to fork out for their corporate social responsibilities is so cool. The big daddy of CSR, of course, is Manny Pangilinan and the MVP/Smart Foundation. Every top CEO should learn from his example.

Cancer campaign

Beauty head Sandra Bea Chua's turned of CSR has a fresh and fun angle. Events for Life are two colognes, named Forth and Inspire, that celebrate life in face of breast cancer. The scents' sales subsidize the cancer awareness of the Invisible race of Pink for Life Foundation.

Sandra Bea Gala was launched at the newly opened Galleria 3, with researcher Billy Crawford opening the show and Karylle serenading the celebrity-studded crowd. Bianca Sanchez hosted the event and is also active with the foundation, recalling how she lost her mom to cancer.

Pink for Life chair Irene Marcial-Emmanuel spoke of the cost-subsidizing cost of chemotherapy treatment coupled with the emotional drama of coping with the dreaded disease. Her message was of faith and inspiration, exactly like the scents themselves.

Its typically Beach fashion, the oils used for the fragrances are first class, imported from Grasse, the perfume capital of France. The Beach group and Pink for Life conceived the final scents together.

Pink for Life director Ngaili Djemaal gave me her Estée Lauder pin in support of breast cancer. I will proudly use it to support the big fight against the BigC.

Youthful campaign

Beach has several initiatives in the CSR world. They are also partnered with Coca-Cola, the country's biggest beverage, in a campaign to renew the sense of hope among Filipino youth.

The "Drink Coke, Shoot a Smile Everyday" campaign is committed to refreshing optimism through client refreshment. Lucky Coke drinkers can win free Beach T-shirts emblazoned with refreshing sloganeers. These Coca-Cola finds Sponsored Shots are ready to members to the youth to share happiness and smiles.

At the launch event, Coca-Cola Export president Kanaly Anand and Coca-Cola Bottlers CEO Daniel Ignacio delivered their own refreshing statements. Bea Chua joined the two for a toast. Saturday Coke glasses to celebrate their partnership for Smiles.

The Duke Emile Andersen, heartthrob Bucheng Bee, TV sweetheart Kim Chiu and youth icon Shaina Magdayao, ripped up the stage with a modern fashion show, as they modeled the Beach tees and showed exactly what a smile can do to improve one's looks.

The launch transformed Bonifacio High Street in Bonifacio Global City into a hip, underground warehouse club with an optimistic and inspirational feel.

Valentine's anticipation

Inspiration is all over, if you know where to look. Over at the EP Dillonet's Palma Hall, the musical play "Stang," is having its last performances. Ayen Laurel leads the cast in a sensitive portrayal that is not to be missed. Theater genius Floy Quintos is the creative master of the play. Tickets are available at the gate.

And speaking of last days, can you believe that January is over? After the sensitive holiday entertainments, it's time to look forward to another holiday!

Yes, Valentine's Day is coming as a particular Ox had better start paying attention on how to make this Bubble happy, or this Year of the Ox will be a very sore ordeal.

E-mail the author at angelmanuel@inquirer.com.ph.

CAT COLLECTION

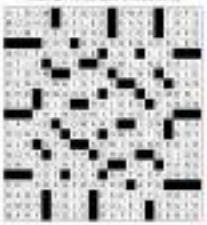
By Gilda Cordero-Fernando

THERE ARE FEW CATS OF Philippine origin that are willingly adopted. They are usually some neglected neighbor's cat who wandered in, attracted by the leftover food in the dog dish (cover of Magnolia ice cream). Or a pusakal (feline counterpart of asiul) wandering the streets and occasionally climbing one's roof to chase another of its variety. They have no market value. They are not even edible.

Pusakals are very smart. They know how to charm. They loiter around, being teased by the homeowners, shot at with a BB gun by the kids and almost get run over by the car backing up. They can go through barbed wire and over glass shards. The pusakal eats anything—sin-day old pansit, lit-ngek, *halo-halo* shells, pukbet, goldfish (from one's pond!), lizards, birds, frogs (they have no conscience). It hangs around so long the homeowner eventually forgets it is not one of her cats.

When a pusakal gets a name (Ming-Ming, Bitong-Mong, Mau-Mau, Shupot) it has found a home. It eats sans RSVP, leftovers and one-drop on top of the fridge or on one of the cushions. If it is a female, alas, it will give birth to a whole litter which the homeowner will try desperately to give away. But they will get returned and returned until they finally get lost and become the next generation of pusakals. And the cycle begins again.

ANSWER TO SUNDAY CROSSWORD



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Traveling becomes a sure road to relaxation when you opt to stay at Park-Bed and Breakfast, a hotel that specializes on people's mobility and flexibility. Too many stops to stay is fast becoming the popular choice for families touring with take pains life on the road either because of business, pleasure or both. Located at EDSA corner 10th Avenue, Pasay City, ParkBB has attracted businessmen and road trippers with its great

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ORAL HEALTH MONTH 2009

Sunday LIFESTYLE

Paloma Urquijo Zobel is the first and only debutante from Southeast Asia in Crillon Hotel's grand ball. She joins the daughters of Bruce Willis and Demi Moore, the Mellons and the Agnellis

Filipino debutante makes it to Old-World ball in Paris

THE CRILLON HOTEL IN Paris is one of the oldest luxury hotels in the world. It was commissioned by King Louis XV and has seen royalty, presidents, dignitaries, personalities and celebrities pass through its doors.

Once a year in November, the hotel plays host to 22 debutantes from all over the world, dubbed the "Crillon Debutante Ball" or "Bal Haute Couture." Others simply call it the 100 km ball.

Originating in the late 1700s in England, it has evolved over the years. In the 1990s, the very elegant PR extravaganza Upstyle Relaunched it the international press Pink Ch touch to the ball. Past debutantes have included the niece of President George W. Bush (Lauren) and the daughter of Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi (Barbara).

T'NT TRENDS & TRENDINGS
Ariston Xavi Diego

CRILLON Hotel

Sunday LIFESTYLE Relationships

Confessions of a 'serial lolo'

By Abe Florendo
Contributor

You don't own your grandchild. If it becomes too unmanageable, you can always return it

I'M NEVER MARRIED, BUT THEY'D no reason I should not have two children, by whatever way (but legal, I assure you).

I came from a large family, 12 children in all, not counting two who died in infancy and smothered two who were stillborn. All by the same father and mother, mind.

It was a time when the Pill was an unheard of as Utopia, and my father and mother must have peaked at the Catholic priest's threat of fire and brimstone if you'd ever had sex for the pleasure of the flesh and not for the sanctified procreation of children.

Apparently, they craved both sinful grace and infamy, and as they went to church with the close connivance of the sainted faithful, while their house filled up to the rafters with screamingly adorable, uncontrollably hungry offspring.

Those days, modern couples, just twelve not, don't even do children anymore. Women would feel foolish and stupid to be birthing twice or thrice, as the most, More than thrice? They'd feel cheap and stupid like their weak-wristed or plumber who have six or seven children, and still more coming, to darken UMG vision of a country where dollars grow on trees and there are jobs for the picking. And this would be brainwashing GMAs years idea of her manifest destiny as well.

Thrilled

Anyway, I got two children, and they're making me a serial Lolo with a speed that might put my own father and mother to shame. But maybe I'm exaggerating. (Read: I'm thrilled.)

My daughter had the consideration and good judgment to get married, and several months pregnant, after finishing her course in hotel and restaurant management, while trying out her 18/16 or 17/21, whatever (Sure prepared her words in the real world), on her work as assistant manager in a multinational fast-food chain.

She didn't last long there, she kept nobody hours, doing shortage at three or four in the morning, 9th find to wake up at around that time to feed her and bring her home in the car (we didn't have the luxury of a family driver), because we didn't want to expose her to lousy taxicab drivers.

After a few months we convinced her to quit that job. Luckily, she was able to find another one in a telecommunications company. How she would be doing things she never learned to do in her four years of college in a big and reputable university and studying it. There must be something that grooms, more or private concerns should do: Internship, simulation and work opportunities.

Well, the good daughter gave me my first ego soon after her wedding in a nice young man who had a job as a nursing book accountant. The rides the armored car in the islands collecting from the bank's many branches).

The baby called Hannah (in Hebrew "full of grace"), may not be the most beautiful child on earth, but to me she is. Before she was born, I had wished that she'd have the looks of her maternal mother (who I think is much prettier than Cinderella), and the complexion of her father (who is as fair as Snow White).

It was the reverse, from grandparents would lament this unpardonable sin of birth. I welcomed it. I loved her, love and her completion, more than anything else in the world.

Landlord

And so began my education (or re-education) from father to Lolo.

You don't own your grandchild; you're just their landlord. Every morning her parents drop her in your house, with the baby's name, before they drive off to work. You, of course, have the privilege to coo and fuss over the baby, taking care you don't make it cry while you're smacking its bottom. But you don't own it. What's true to advantage: If it becomes too unmanageable, you can always return it.

And there are rules. You can't buy her toys or ice cream, except when her mother says so. But her mother is not always around when she T (Mr. Tofu, hello?) or the dirty ice-cream man passes by, and Naomi is crying, her mom's out for their children mode. What would you do?

Or you bring her to the supermarket or department store and you want to buy her the little things her little heart desires: the cheap plastic playthings costing less than a hundred pesos that will break or worse, for less than an hour, the dreadfully sweet lollipops and chocolates and the more frightening burgers and fries. What would you do?

Am I spoiling my pretty little grandchild? Am I maiming her for life? Somebody, or those glossy magazines on parenting, has to tell this doting Lolo, and convincingly, how to do it right. (But those glossy magazines have young writers and opinion writers with egregious interpretations in birthing or raising children.)

So what now? Another baby girl came along, named Helena, although her father had prayed with all the might of his born-Again faith for a boy. (I suppose that her father, a 6'2" basketball player, will not stop until he gets a boy, otherwise he'd have to continue himself with an all-girl basketball team.)

And she Lola, enthusiastic as ever, welcomed the newborn with his heart and his meager pocketbook, as if his 500 pensos went large enough to buy more plastic toys and Barbie shoes-sized Happy Meals.

Permission

Talk about serial grandparenthood, but a few months after Helena was born, my son and his wife expected their 3rd baby (There, unless another confessional story, but suffice to say that in those times, young people don't seem to need anyone's permission to unite, yours or the other set of parents' or the priest's, but for goodness' sake, they are not teens 21 yet!).

Whenever, you look forward to your third grandchild. What else could you do?

Thank my stars that my son and his pregnant live-in girlfriend ("Live-in" would have roundabout to death my sainted, ultra-fertile mother), though afraid of graduating from college (like what good would graduating from college do them, in these GMA times?), have discovered how to make a little money.

They are applying the skills learned from playing all-night computer games and internet surfing to market purposes. They're busy buying and selling on eBay baby things—diapers, feeding bottles, baby clothes, cribs, bouncers, etc.—foolishly using the money they made from selling the old Starcastle baby seat that played music at the touch of a button that my sweet ex-baby-bearing daughter wanted to dispose of.

They have collected a roomful of those for their baby, leaving just the ceiling from where to hang their baby's crib and pass pacifiers.

I'm not complaining. I hope, for the sake of their lasting relationship as in their and mother, that they'd think of putting up a layette shop after the birth of their first baby, and earn them and their baby's keep, on the clever understanding that their child's Lolo wouldn't be earning enough to indulge their child's whims and pleases to their and mother, they've not around, nor to maximize her vulnerability to cajole his desire through last food stocks.

But the moral here is: Something you think is dispensable is necessary or valuable to another. Sell it on eBay—at easyoung03.multiply.com.

Too eager

The other moral is: Don't be too eager to become a second-time or third-time or multiple-time Lolo, especially during these times when GMA is not even what it do is suspected the economy and a stupid Lavuda thinks he is.

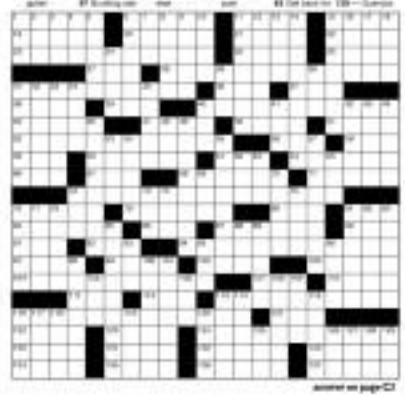
But for me, the die is cast. My third grandchild was born on the third of January. And it was cause for celebration. There were balloons saying "Welcome home, Baby Irish" in the nursery room that I made out from my computer room-turn-office (but I had retained to the old maid's room-turn-family room.

CONFESSIONS 02

Sunday Crossword

OPENING THEME

PREMIER CROSSWORD By Frank A. Longo



answer on page C3

Getting to know my father through a scrapbook

By Erlinda Tan
Contributor

From this heirloom, I've come to some conclusions about the kind of dad I had

MY FATHER DIED IN A CAR accident when I was seven. His 37 now. He was a civil engineer and traveled a lot in his projects, so I hardly spent quality time with him. I have only vague memories of my dad.

In the Philippines, I grew up in a house constructed along the coast on top of a seawall. Bad luck that house. It was a beautiful place with a scenic view and sea breeze.

But our province is known for typhoons. We get more than 10 a year. Typhoons with wind speeds of 250 kph aren't news there. They can be very destructive so they can break window panes and pool off roofs, sizing first things dry inside the house. I can't remember how many typhoons I experienced growing up.

Today I don't have a single picture of my dad. Typhoons left all of his memories soaked in the early 1980s, before we could have access to scanners and computers.

I don't have anything in remember him by except for one little thing I was able to salvage—a scrapbook.

Through the scrapbook, I believe I have come to know him as a person, his inclinations in life and maybe his personality, too.

This scrapbook is a compilation of pictures and stories of the late US president John F. Kennedy.

When I found it, I was so amazed that my dad, who lived in a remote town in the Philippines, a town that didn't have power supply even in the 1970s, could have idolized this American president so much to the extent of collecting news clippings about him.

The scrapbook has pictures and stories of JFK from his inauguration into office to the year his man shot dead. Which means my dad had gathered the articles even as child.

MEMORIES of Cornelio: My father's scrapbook is a compilation of pictures and stories of the late US president John F. Kennedy—a tradition I've decided to continue.

Sentimental

From this, I've come to some conclusions about the kind of father I had—a man who let himself prattle, a man who was good at communication, a sentimental person who treasured memories, a person who valued those things in life on which many couldn't really put value on, like a scrapbook.

Call it genes or coincidence, but I see this kind of person, too. Not to mention I am an engineer as well. Was the scrapbook an influence or, what I would become? I don't know, and it doesn't really matter.

What is important is that I found a "connection" to my father through this scrapbook, even if I never got to spend much of my life with him. Anywhere I go I bring this, a 16-year-old heirloom I would like to give to my children.

Sometimes I ask, why did he prepare this scrapbook? Did he ever think that, someday, it would be very valuable to his children?

Again, I don't know. But I have decided to continue what he did. I also cut out and keep any news article I find about the Kennedy family. I am imagining how my dad must have grieved when JFK was assassinated. I had a similar feeling when John John Kennedy's plane crashed into the waters.

I hope this story inspires others to make something their children will remember fondly.

Life can be so unpredictable. A simple thing, like a scrapbook, may someday help our children to get to know us. It did become a bridge to the father I had not known in this life.

Woman worries about staying single at 34

DEAR EMILY,

Staying single at 34 has made me examine myself. Bar-hopping, drinking and partying, etc. aren't me. In my mid-20s, I let go of good men because I thought I weren't ready. They say opposites seldom knocks more than once.

I had many suitors; I was attractive then. I ceased to be outgoing when Miranda got married. Now, after another, I've fallen into the trap of getting more picky after years of waiting for the right man. I've adopted the wait-and-see attitude. I'd be happy if he comes; if not, fine.

Men are telling me they want someone younger, prettier and with the best of character. What is your view about our society's notion that being "settled" has to happen in marriage?

Why do people look at singles, especially women, as incomplete? Some even push you to do things you don't want to do because they want to help. But is it right to just wait and rely on fate?

—DO SOMETHING

Times have changed. This is not your parents' or grandparents' generation anymore. The world is a destination now, and single women can get pregnant just by making a satisfactory love the right birth.

But let a professional whose mind is overrun enough to question the world around you. But you're right in not accepting the status quo. Don't be disturbed by what others are saying about being single. And don't tell yourself, don't—how "physically unattractive" have you become?

Aren't you being too judgmental with yourself with those harsh words? Get out of your box and be involved with parents (up get that yourself.

Devour time in the sun. Fortunate in our midst...if you wish. Take up a hobby that will fill your soul. Learn a language. Cook with friends on weekends. Make yourself complete without waiting in desperation for Mister Right. Are lists secure and content you will become.

Enjoy your single blessedness because it truly is a precious state. With the right attitude, you will see how lucky you are to do as you please and be as free as you wish. So in taking inconveniences from another person to deal with. No one to wear you out.

But be on the right track...minus those petty distractions like having to be loved.

Sex might have your thoughts and voila! The stuff you've been praying for might just happen when you least expect it. Sweet chaos moments while you can. Don't you consider this outlandish, no female exclusive—actually?

Send your letter to emily@inquirer.com.ph, subject: Lifestyle, or send your letter to Inquirer, Lag-as to emily@i.gmr.ph and then with Manila to hear the program "Radyowan Pigbasa," 7:15-8:30 p.m., Monday-Friday, on dzBB 1161/1566.

EMILY'S POST
Emily A. Marcelo

Setting a new Statement with a Smile

As everyday life gets even tougher, we need an uplifting source of encouragement in order to meet different challenges head-on. It drives us to be more creative, resilient as a team and that is why it is important for us to be positively refreshed and to be able to share the same spirit of optimism with others.

The country's leading beverage of choice, Coca-Cola, provides that essential physical and emotional refreshment that allows us to spread the spirit of optimism to others. With its unique Hippy and bubbly taste, Coca-Cola leaves each of us with a smile we can't help wishing a person that we can share with friends.

Recognizing the great potential and power that was the Filipino spirit, both Coca-Cola, in collaboration with global brand Bench, launched the Drink Coke, Wear a Smile Everyday promo, one of the biggest partnerships of the year that will surely give every one of us decent reasons to smile. Coca-Cola's latest campaign jumpstarted 2009 through three beautifully designed shirts bearing different statements expressing optimism. The Coke Smile Statement Shirts are the latest and hottest "in" thing among the youth that sends out positive shout-outs such as "MAS AAMIN SA COKE AT MAS MARAMA", "A COKE A DAY KEEPS THE BAGTRIP AWAY" and "COKE KA LANG COKE, KA LANG".

The Coke Smile Ambassadors Desiree Del Valle, Kim Chiu and Regine Velasquez personally donned these Coke Smile shirts during the DRINK COKE WEAR A SMILE EVERYDAY promo launch. As Coke Smile ambassadors, these three youth icons want to inspire and spread optimism by leading through example and reminding us how beautifully happy life can be when it's filled with smiles, and with a Coke in hand.

The fun and youth-filled celebration of refreshing optimism continues as Coca-Cola stays true to its commitment in giving the Filipino youth more reasons to smile everyday!

So let's join the DRINK COKE WEAR A SMILE EVERYDAY promo. Just look under the trolley screens at all stalls of Coke, Royal, Sunkist, Coke Light or Coke Zero and get a chance to win Coke Smile Shirts or a Free Coke Blast! Visit COKE MOBILE Shop Coke Mini at Ayala Malls Glorietta 4, Ayala Harbor Point and Coke Tuesday Shirts at selected SM/CP stores, Puregold Markets or Coke Sales Offices.

Promo valid March 31, 2009

Mag-SMILE as babay. Mag-[illegible] lang sweepin!

Confessions. . .

From page D2

If I had the money, I would have thrown a party and invited the neighbors, too.

How far should we support our children when they are already of age and bearing their own children? Indulgent lolas who have the means (the pinoy thinking is, you can't take it with you, anyway) and the untrolled albeit Where else will you borrow it?) will go to the limits.

But where should it stop? I can't tell you. This serial letter writer only confirms that nothing is more miraculous than society baby to sound your years against.

But dear God, let me not assist those years with the fingers of my one hand. Expand my territory so my love always prayed in the words of John. But please, let it not be a down below to fill the house up in the ashes.

Cathy Babay-Gabuchi's column, "Words and Wings," will come out on Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2009.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

THE ZOBEL family led by Don Jaime and Bea

CASPER Van Dien and Catherine Dunsberg with their daughters

CHRISTIAN Louboutin and Bea Zobel Jr

CRILLON Ballroom

Filipino debutante makes it to Old-World . . .

From page D3

This year's soiree had Bruce Willis and Demi Moore's daughter Rumi, James and Sarah Meriken's daughter Sarah, and Conrad Iorga von der Pahlen and Meaghanne Agustin's daughter Concetta Tatiana. There were also debutantes from Japan, Korea and China. Not the first time in the ball's history, a Filipina made her debut.

Last February, I met with Boncourt in Hulo who asked me to help her choose a debutante from the Philippines. There were many ladies to choose from. I suggested Ms. Severo names to Boncourt, who then chose the lucky young woman—Paloma Urquijo Zobel.

Three-day ball

The ball was held last Nov. 29, spread over three days.

After months of coordinating, e-mails, faxings and tensions, we arrived in Paris, each thermaled and bundled up. Our Paloma was lucky enough to have around her her mother Bea Jr, siblings Jaime and Monica and grandparents Don Jaime and Doña Bea Zobel. Bea was fortunate to have her excellent stylist Danny Kaufma from Emphasis to the same city she was attending a fitting/modeling). She made her and her mom look radiant. Bea Jr. wore a turquoise Jean Louis gown and a Bea Valdes neckpiece, and simply was a standout.

Paloma's escort was Marc Ann Co-Urquiza de Pampelonne's son Dominic, her older brother Jaime was the escort of her friend Sean Egege.

The first night we had dinner at the Grand Trianon Ballroom. It made me recall the book "My Last Supper: 50 Great Chefs and Their Final Meals." Although I am no chef, I could turn this meal as one of the best I ever had. Of course, the company made it even more special.

The second day was a series of shoots in the hotel and around the city to enable Paloma and her family to do evening, the chairman and CEO of Starwood Capital Group worldwide, the company that owns the umbrella group of Hotel de Crillon, Westin, W and Sheraton St Regis, hosted cocktails at Le Cercle Baccarat Room, where the debutantes, escorts and families got to meet each other and get acquainted during the soiree.

The day of the event saw a flurry of activities. The debutantes were to do group photos and check out the jewelry they had to wear (courtesy of Jaffer). Paloma and family also had to be photographed for the Philippine Tatler—and had to tour the city.

The ball was set for 6:30 p.m. but I arrived early to shoot the grand set-up. I got along well with the UK-based photographer Tim Griffiths, a veteran of the ball who gave me the lowdown on what to expect that night. He was accommodating and kind enough to let me pull him aside whenever I wanted someone photographed.

Casper Van Dien

Once guests trickled in, I made my way to Bea Jr and Ross Ann de Pampelonne. We met the very pretty and gracious royalty actress Catherine Dunsberg (Amanda on the TV show "Dynasty") and her husband, actor Casper Van Dien ("Starship Troopers"). Van Dien revealed the dance he spent in Pagandian filming a movie and how his crew kept asking him to try the "egg with a duck in it," while Catherine talked of how much she appreciated her "yaya" and that she knew two Filipinas, nurses planning to the our secrets.

We got to meet the shoe king Christian Louboutin, a friend of Rose Ann, who asked about former First Lady Imelda Marcos. I guess it's the shoe thing. We also got to meet and have photos with Hollywood royalty—Bruce Willis (with girlfriend, model Emma Heming), Demi Moore and Ashton Kutcher. And, yes, Demi was as beautiful in the in the movies, and Ashton very tall and handsome. While I found Bruce quite smug, to Bea Jr he was debonair and the ultimate host. "Where I met him my heart turned to jelly!" she said.

I had the biggest laugh of the evening when Rose Ann introduced me to a gentleman, dove un signore/Lo ne, "Tavia the illustrious Amanda of Point" I told her that Bloomers would just love that!

After we sat at our tables for a sumptuous dinner of foie gras and lobster, the debutantes were presented one by one to the guests and the press. All the debutantes (in couture dresses, from Lanvin, Givenchy and Oscar de la Renta, etc.) and escorts were beautiful and handsome. Of course, some were visibly nervous but then, considering they were between 16 and 22 years old, they looked and moved like pros.

OPHELIE Surnaurd, Paloma Zobel and Anton San Diego

BEA Jr with Bruce Willis

BEA Jr with children Paloma, Jaime and Monica Urquijo Zobel

Beaming with pride

Our eyes were glued to the Filipina contingent. Paloma looked beautiful in her burgundy Carolina Herrera gown, while Jaime and Dominic looked very handsome. Their mothers and grandparents were beaming with pride.

Dancing followed, then the debutantes and their escorts went to paint the town red. Most of them had to catch an early flight the next day to head back to school.

It was truly a memorable time for me as I took pride in the fact that I helped choose the debutante from our country and felt even grander to have experienced it with them, the Philippines. Other debutantes have yet to be asked, I'm sure they will be soon. I am also very sure that these young women will remember this pair of their lives and treasure it forever. As Bea Jaime said, "I am sure Paloma will be sharing this event even with her grandchildren."

And while I may mean that the Crillon Ball is all pomp and pageantry, it is also a fundraiser. This year's recipient was the Melvin Benn Schlanger Foundation for diabetes research.

PHILIPPINE Tatler February 2009 cover

DEMI Moore, Ashton Kutcher, Emma Heming and Bruce Willis at Bacarrat cocktails

First Gourmet Academy
BEHIND EVERY GREAT STUDENT IS A GREAT CHEF
THE LOUNGE AT PODIUM
The Comedy
Album Tour
February 6 • Fri
6 pm
Dianne Elise
Album Tour
February 7 • Sat
6 pm
PODIUM

Sunday LIFESTYLE

IN THIS ISSUE

■ Filipino debutante makes it to Old-World ball in Paris /D1

Lifestyle do's and don'ts in the era of new poverty

When display of power is so tacky

By Thelma Sioson San Juan

IN MY GYM/CLUB, I've gotten used to this regular characteristic: a sentimental politician in his middle age (thus not infirm or decrepit) comes with security entourage, from motorcycle escorts, back-up cars (plural) to bodyguards.

As he works out, the security detail stands by. After workout, the barrista brings to our politician's personal stuff, from shirt to socks (undies, no, we presume) and shoes—and helps him get dressed. All this logistic rol/security support for a 1h. max workout!

Don't even try to imagine what other logistics our politicians can't live without.

Droppings of power are such big news now; they've come with the territory for ages. But, in the Philippines, at no time has their display been more obnoxious than they are now.

Perhaps it's because our era has seen the end of our sense of decency, decorum and delicadeza (and you thought the Marcos Era was bad).

Bodyguards, police escorts on obligations—whether at the golf course (remember the front page news?), church, hotel, hospital, school, malls, you name it, they're there at the back and call of our public servants. Stuck in a bumper-to-bumper and fix in Edsa, you're moving in your car and hear the ear-piercingly shrill siren-song-song of a big shot's siren escort (an. helmet, you don't mind!) signaling the rest of the motorists to make way for the majestic entourage—as if there's an extra inch of road to maneuver in.

So why can't they go through traffic like everybody else? Either that or they fly off! Educational institutions are no exception. Hidden wealth is best kept hidden, because every time we see signs of it, we feel bad for our country, our children and our children's children.

That brings us to what is most missed in these hard times, and this don'ts:

+That song-song. Kill it. Such corruptions are for life- and death situations, not for when you're late for your children outing or your "afternoon delight."

+Don't wear your bodyguard like you do your Cartier. No returns, but tax deductions from our salaries every time we see bodyguards. Don't "brandish" bodyguards, who, in turn, shouldn't brandish guns.

+Don't wear your power. A wise, powerful editor once told us, if you really have power, you don't need to show it. Showing off is tacky in these humbling times, or in any time.

+Don't display your wealth. Or, to rationalize it to ourselves: Hidden wealth is best kept hidden, because every time we see signs of it, we feel bad for our country, our children and our children's children.

+ Don't believe your own press release (especially if you wrote it yourself). People buying their own hype is today's tragedy.

+ Don't max out your credit card. An aunt, who worked her way up the corporate ladder (coming to it late in life, as many of her generation did), was always fond of saying: "Don't buy what you can't pay in cash." Words to live by.

+ Acquire the taste, not necessarily the brand.

+ Read. Not just lip-read.

+ Invest wisely. Not in business necessarily, but in people and relationships. Nurture a client. That investment is long-term.

+ Help yourself to some food for the soul.

+ Even if you can't be rich, be real.

+ Find true religion. That's not a jesus brand. It's religion.

The rainy days are here in Britain

Aristocrats sell a Titian or two—but they still have their country mansions

By Margie Braid Cullen
Contributor

LONDON—IT'S INDISCRIMINATE; it could happen to you. If you have any smidgen of charity in your soul, you wouldn't wish it upon your enemy.

Friends have lost their jobs and are girding their battle gear to join the ranks of the INSIPID (destitute, unemployed mature professionals), WINOS (no income, no jobs, no assets) are real people whose means, proving children have been yanked out of private schools, whose homes have been foreclosed).

If you know anybody about the English, you would know that his home is his castle and sanctuary. These are dark days for a cash-strapped people.

Small treats that make life sweet—muffins and cappuccinos, a new spring wardrobe, weekends in Majorca—are no more. Like a recurring addict who has gone completely cold turkey, I really, nervously have put my favorite shops.

Shopping—that endorphin-activated activity I used to enjoy in Paris, New York, Rome, London, where I changed anything and everything to my credit cards—is now a dim memory. In a mad, felicitous bubble, we went on a debt-fueled binge to assemble the delights of several branches of greed, gluttony and materialism.

Did I really need all those shoes, cashmere sweaters, bags? Whatever for?

I have given back the credit cards, thank you very much, to those very nice people who kept upping my credit limits without my asking. These days, if I don't have the cash, I don't buy. You soon learn to distinguish need from want, to prune and demolish your desires.

We're not on the breadline, this is neither Iceland (bankrupt) nor Zimbabwe (meltdown), and even in the grip of a recession, it's still the sixth largest economy in the world, an affluent country with salary nets that continue to provide material and financial support to its people, especially the most vulnerable.

So why do I feel we're hanging in there by a gossamer thread, going to hell in a handcart, distinctly poor?

Comfort

It always looks darkest just before it gets totally black. Thatto doesn't give one comfort, but he has a way with words. And so I take a stroll on the dark side.

As a fully fledged member of the new coping class, I soften the blows, take a deep breath. I study the state of my finances; I budget, cross the household bills and essentials, but not bank on some expenditures. If you don't note them, you probably didn't need them. It's a slow process, but I'm learning to take pleasure in delayed gratification, to-do-ers.

It's true that you can spook yourself so much you become afraid to spend and hypersensitive when opening bills, terrified of the future.

Turn the heating off and wear two pairs of socks and two jerseys, go to bed with a hot-water bottle. Since one's out for further hardship. God forbid the economic turmoil should result in social disphoria or civil disobedience!

"That's the secret to life," the old war Charlie Brown says. "Replace our worry with gratitude."

The outlook is quite grim, the screaming headlines and breaking news deliver breathlessly (as do your head in. The last time we were in this soup was in the early '90s, but it didn't feel half as profoundly bad as now.

The unemployment rate is at its highest for 11 years and rising, consumer spending set to freeze for 13. This is awesome; this is global. Who is hailing whom out?

Slippery

We have been brutally shaken awake, meeting the mother of all hangovers. It's a new, slippery, scary world. Even the stars are getting their glamour as we drive to the winter cold. We count the cost of our unbridled excesses and indulgences, when we assumed the good times would go on forever, and someone else will pay the bill later.

We're making do or doing without. Economizing, mending broken things, buying late in the day when supermarkets mark down food items.

Second hand goods are chic; thrift shops are in. Free spending shoppers have gone to ground, even as retailers discount heavily. To make ends meet, those still in jobs moonlight. Hobbies are open into cash-earners—belly-dancing, tutoring, driving.

Christmas is unlikely to provide much cheer; parties are out. Big, heavy gifts? No. Give your time instead, or a jar of homemade jam, pickled onions. Kids who have been brought up in an age when they could have almost anything are taught—effortlessly—to carry, stack packages, leave fun in the snow with makeshift sleds.

We want an explanation of how we got into this mess, so we're reading instructive books on finance, economics, the Great Depression. It's a small, but satisfying, take-control gesture, as we scrimp, save, sow and sense for the future, whatever it might bring.

Even in a pull-itself-world, it's not all doom and gloom. For every one suffering the pain of the downturn, someone's making a killing.

Cinemas are full; cobblers are busy mending shoes; pawnbrokers, car and bike repair shops are doing a roaring trade. We fear for our health, but we comfort ourselves with chocolate and takeaway curries, Chinese and pizzas.

Misery

Britain remains the favorite home and playground of the rich, who are not well apart from the merely affluent.

Aristocrats sell a Titian or two, Russian oligarchs, Asian tycoons and Middle Eastern sovereigns might be down a yacht or two, but they're still committed to their Belgravia or country mansions. Not seen to be splurging hoots, but still enjoying obscene amounts of lolly.

This hedonism recession, so called because it's hurting the middle classes most, is costing a huge pall of misery on our bejabbered classes. We now know that this downturn is the ugly successor of our successful years, we too are to blame for our reckless profligacy.

What causes be shrewd must be endured. It's so simple, really, that it might break your heart.

Face your fear. Seek help. Don't take on debts you can't pay. Live within your means. Don't throw all caution to the wind. Budget your expenses. Share or biggest is not always better. Save for a rainy day.

This cloud, too, will lift, but today, that rainy day is here.

Flavors of Macau

THE MACAU FOOD FESTIval, "Flavors of Macau," will be held Feb. 13-March 13 at 18 top restaurants in Metro Manila: March 1-15 at Marco Polo Plaza in Cebu; and March 31-April 12 at Marco Polo Hotel in Davao.

The local festival will feature Macanese (ethnic) specialties tossed by chefs Jessie Sincioco, Margarita Fores, Ricky Pacheco, Myrna Segismundo, Gene Mackey, Luke Gagnon and Ed Soriano—during their trip to Macau last year.

The restaurants offering the Flavors of Macau are Le Soufflé (Rockwell and The Fort); Top of the City (Citibank Tower); Pepato (Greenbelt); Café Bola (Cubao and Greenbelt); Chamorro (377 Greenbelt); Parkin' (Greenbelt); Sala Bistro (Makati); Restaurant 1900 (Alabang); Café Mezza at Marco Polo Plaza in Cebu; and at Marco Polo Hotel in Davao. Diners who order dishes from the special Macanese menu-buffet are entitled to a raffle ticket. Winners will be entitled to a free package in Macau, including airfare, accommodations at a five-star hotel and deliveries to Cineplex de Entrelago. For more information, call 8123100, 8139847; e-mail mgrapht@hotmail.com.ph.

DR. RYBNA: Cito Treverrosa and her son Pachelo Treverrosa

BACHELORS: president Kit Lopez and Feminas president Celeste Rodriguez

PERLA: Agustin Pearson and Georgia Osmeña

Grand ball celebrates revival of Bachelors and Feminas

IN 1939, A GROUP OF YOUNG ladies from Cebu's best families formed a musical group with guitars, bass and similar stringed instruments. The group evolved into the Bachelors and Feminas Club of Cebu.

By the 1990s, they instituted an annual formal ball on Dec. 28, highlighted by a Rigodon de Honor.

As the years passed, the B-F balls were recalled with nostalgia, and talks of reviving were futile. Until two years ago, former Feminas president Perla Agustin Pearson stepped down from the USA and revived the group.

$2 million more made to build a ball with a Rigodon on Dec. 28, 2007, and that was a grand occasion.

As soon as that was over, work started on forming the new B-F with young people, as is used to be. Officers were chosen, led by Kit Lopez for the Bachelors and Celeste Rodriguez for the Feminas. They got involved in heritage tours, tree planting and civic work.

Perla, the ultimate driving force, was adamant about the Dec. 28 ball and its Rigodon. Johnnie Macapinlac of Budgetcaters was contacted to coach and rehearse the initiation dinner-to-be, and a string ensemble from the Bruce Philharmonic were from a painstaking rendition of the waived music.

As tradition has it, Papas and Mamas were searched, with former Cebu City Mayor Alvin Garcia accepting for the Bachelors; for the Feminas, former Bachelors presidents Wan Escotoredo, who came from Australia just for the occasion.

Two weeks to the ball and there were no Mamas yet. Perla was almost in a faint, and gathered old and young alike to meet at the gazebo of Manila Polo Subdivision in Mivela. "We must have the Mamas tonight," Perla raged the glass on the table.

Marquisits, in smooth runes, calmly said, "Let me make some calls." Three minutes later there were two dazzling Mamas—Georgia Osmeña, to partner with Alvin, and Dr. Marina Chin Yeaman to be dance with Mike.

The search was one of the most beautiful balls of the recent joyous season at Salon de Reparia of Cordero Espanol de Cebu. Architect Tessie Javier, along with Pinky Chang, devised the beautiful decor of white swags on centerpieces, lacy fetes and crystal prisms. Strings of faceted crystal beads also hung from the ballroom's chandeliers casting further sparkle.

At the reception line stood Kit Lopez and Celeste Rodriguez, with the Papas and the Mamas, who looked gorgeous. Georgia was in a terno of midnight blue, and a Farbota floating chiffon gazed. Vivian wore an elaborate nuevo terno which Ronald Villaverde, ever so talented, conceived in record time. Mike was getting the nod from many friends who had not seen him for some time.

CEBU CEBU

Jaime Piconnell

Labor of love

Alvin gave a little speech saying that all efforts to hold the ball were truly a labor of love. "Thank you, Tita Perla," Kit and Celeste said when their turn came. From her seat, Perla glowed with happiness and satisfaction. Toastwhere must her words Cortes and Sylvia Rodriguez, proud parents of the Feminas president, and representing one of the oldest and most prominent families in Cebu.

Everyone agreed that the Rigodon was one of the best performed, and many did in a pretty as well as beautifully dressed. Cebu being what it is, and prepared to be generous, there was no display of jewelry in this Rigodon. Predictable and elegance were achieved with simplicity and prudence.

As protocol has it, Kit danced with Celeste; Alvin with Georgia, and Mike with Vivian Fuerbaten. VP Patrick Yared was paired with Rendyann Gaisano, micrologue daughter of Gigi and Chareveluse Garcia. Treasurer Evan Mendoza and Lei Jimenez danced together.

As did auditors Marvin D'Avelia and Celestine Torres, who drew oohs and aahs for her beauty and poise. She is the daughter of former Bachelors president Vic and Yoyo Torres, and yes, a first cousin of Lucy Torres-Gomez.

Who else danced the Rigodon? I'll have to pass at that for Celeste was two days before the ball: Nicole San Jose and Raymond Garcia; Alexandra Ghaleb and Jan Ibay-Somera; Mary Anne Bakup and Paolo Bordin; Naomi Ouanders and Ricardo Rodolfo Ramirez; Angelique Javier and Danilo Javier; Summer Eve Shuler and David Shuler; Joanna Marie Alba and Raymond Tagaan; Adrienne Lim and Neil San Pedro; Hannah Young and Andrew Eusebio; Cherrie Young and Rony Tecson, who took care of the dance sounds for the rest of the evening. He's the best DJ ever!

Coming up for the B-F, young and **alumni alike, is the Feb. 20 pan-**Valentine party also at Casino Español. It promises to be lots of fun, planned by Perla and her group—Anne Marie Uy, Billy Boy Bacis, Maricris Yeung, Bill and Annie Siwi, Ivy Dimson, Nelia Neri, Chinggay Umutman, Mayen Tan and seeing Cebu City Mayor Mike Rama.

"Everyone has to put his name on a card, and drop it in respective boxes or bowls," explains Perla, so there will be a draw later on, to proclaim who'll be King and Queen of Hearts. "Make it nice," some have already expressed their desire.

For the rest of 2009, it will be heroic as all efforts will be made for a super ball on Dec. 28 to mark 90 years since it F was born. The meetings have as the basic body, with discussion as to what to do, and who'll dance the Rigodon. The alumni want very much to be in it. Ah, well

Breeding Winners In The Sports Arena And Beyond

"GREAT THINGS START from small beginnings," this fine line of the classic MILO jingle is the inspiration behind the new MILO commercial theme: Building Champions In Life. "Real" and typical looking as other Filipino kids, the children featured in the brand's new TV commercial represent the small beginnings where future champions could sprout.

For more than four decades, MILO has always believed that every child has a great potential and the best way to unleash this is through the experience of sports. From training to competition, even in victory or defeat, to or she learns skills to become an amazing athlete. More importantly, the child is also exposed to important values to help succeed in everyday life.

New MILO Ambassador

In most of its commercials campaigns through the years, MILO has been featuring champions that could serve as good role models. Among them are tennis Queen Czarina De Vega, Gymnast and Olympian Ina Linares, and Taekwondo MIA Gamon Gold Medalist Japoy Lasanta. This 2009, Chris Tiu is the latest addition to this prestigious roster of MILO Ambassadors. This basketball champion joined [illegible] where he [illegible] shown, to win the 2008 UAAP men's basketball championship. But what makes him more legendary and endearing, is how he is off court. Chris' loving, good-natured, wholesome family life, principled, sweet is underrated, champion for youth leadership and public education, these are just some of the qualities and advocacies that make Chris qualify as one of the MILO ambassadors.

"It's an honor for me to be chosen as one of the ambassadors because the thrust of MILO is something that I perfectly agree with, developing the youth and creating champions in life through sports. That's just perfect for me because I'm an athlete. I truly believe that sports is a metaphor for life and it's like a training ground for the real game called life," says Chris.

"Chris embraces the thrust of MILO to get into sports and we share the belief that sports is an effective vehicle in building champions while teaching children values they need to win in life. There's no better individual to help us get this crucial message across than Chris, who personifies the attributes of a true champion," says Manolo Pay and Consumer Marketing Manager [illegible]

While he's passionate about the notion that he's a role model, Chris says he doesn't feel any pressure or difficulty associated with it. "I don't have to pressure to be somebody I'm not. I just try to be my best in everything whether it's basketball, hosting, studies, or even relationships with other people so it's not like I want live up according to expectations," says Chris.

The Making Of A Champion

Like most champions through, Chris's [illegible] a successful and respected basketball star did [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Sky Garden will snake around SM North Edsa, from The Block to the Annex

ARTIST'S RENDERING of the Sky Garden at SM North Edsa

IT'S A GOOD sign that even mall developers are trying to create a natural landscape to give weary urbanites a chance to breathe.

Oxygen for a choking city

DREW Barrymore on E!, wearing an eye-popping neckpiece made by Filipino-born designer Rene Ann Co Unjieng de Pamperonne

THUMBS DOWN ABOVE: the clutter of bills is a one-of-a-kind wonder to the metropolis. It's a Sky Garden that snakes around SM North Edsa, from The Block to the Annex.

It's a good sign that even mall developers are trying to create a natural landscape—a vast expanse of greenery that should give weary urbanites a chance to breathe. Metro Manila is a megapolis gasping for air.

At last, here is a design that should give smokers their much needed oxygen supply.

Spanning almost 16,000 sq. m., it will be lined and dotted with trees and foliage—perfect for absorbing the smog around. A waterfall (man-made, of course) is at the end of this winding promenade.

Retail stores and restos in sleek glass and steel pavilions will line the Sky Garden.

The centerpiece of this development is an amphitheater with a skylight atrium. Designed to be the prime events venue of the north, it will have panoramic lights, which should make it quite a sight at night.

The Sky Garden, which is due to open in April, should give mall goers a fresh view of the cityscape, no matter the congestion.

This is recession?

A watch and jewelry retail businessman is incredulous. He says this January have been the highest in a decade, continuing the holiday from his holiday performance.

Drew wore Rose's

Guessing on E!, Drew Barrymore wore an eye-popper of a neckpiece. A closer look revealed it was by Filipino-born designer Rene Ann Co Unjieng de Pamperonne, who's been gaining a growing clientele in Paris.

Made-to-order body

A cosmetic surgeon's clinic got a surprise call one day. It was from a business executive who said he wanted a body (through liposuction presumably) that was exactly like that of—and here he dropped the name of an actor who is 10 years his junior and who apparently has become the businessman's obsession. He wanted those abs, and he was adamant. The clinic unsurprisingly was too dumbfounded to ask the businessman what his wife would say. Tough call.

ICAM homecoming

MOTHER OF THE IMMACULATE Conception Academy of Manila (the event's fellow Addictions, to cooperate with the ICAM Alumnae Association, will host the grand homecoming of all ICAMites on Feb. 7, Saturday, at the ICAM grounds at G. del Rosario St., Guadalupe, Nuevo, Manila.

Registration starts at 9 a.m. followed by a Mass at 11 a.m. and lunch. There will be a program and fellowship from 2 p.m. onwards.

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Sunday LIFESTYLE

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BVLGARI Rose Essentielle and Bvlgari Jasmin Noir

VERSACE Bright Crystal and Versace Pour Homme

Say it with scents

MARVEL Cuvee Eau de Parfum Vaporisateur Nouvelle Aura Turquoise

CELEBRATE THE season of love with Rustan's and co-sponsor Citibank with its Perfumery, Cosmetics and Skin Care Festival, "Love is... Rustan's & Celebration of Fragrance, Beauty & Wellness."

Enjoy great rewards as you shop for your loved ones. Until Feb. 28, minimum purchase of P3,000 entitles one to a raffle entry.

Rustan's will be rewarding 10 lucky shoppers with gift certificates for a three day, two-night stay with breakfast, lunch and dinner for two at Shangri-La's Boracay Resort and Spa that will operate in April. Twelve dinner certificates for two will also be given away, valid at Shangri-La Hotel's Canton Event Gallery. Another 12 gift certificates will also be given to experience heaven on the 5th with any of the wellness treatments from Clarins, Dermalogica and Murad at Rustan's Makati.

The promos valid at Rustan's Makati, Shangri-La Plaza, Gateway, Alabang Town Center and Ayala Center Cebu.

All brands are available at Rustan's Makati (tel. 8133730), Shangri-La Plaza Mall (6344636), Gateway (8113401), Robinsons Place (8313788), Alabang Town Center (8089000) and Ayala Center Cebu (032-2316662).

ESTEE Lauder Pleasures and White Linen

FOR A MINIMUM purchase of P 4,000, get a free Clarins Aqua Essence Morning Energy and Aqua Essence Evening Fusion

CLINIQUE Dramatically Different Moisturizing Lotion, Clarifying Lotion, Mild Liquid Facial Soap and Superdefense Triple Action Moisturizer

LA PRAIRIE Youthful Eyes set: Anti-aging Eye Cream, Anti-aging Complex and Silver Rain Fragrance

CHANEL No. 5 Eau de Parfum

FOR EVERY P4,500 purchase of Kanebo products, you get a free Kanebo Vanity Kit.

Shopping, dining and entertainment privileges and more with

The Ayala Malls A Ca

Ring in 2009 with cheer as Ayala Malls lay out the red carpet for every valued cu with its Ayala Malls A Card—your access to ultimate malling experience in the A

ENJOY dining privileges at the Ayala Malls with the A Card.

GETTING cinema tickets is a breeze with the express lane for Ayala Malls A Card holders.

SHOPPING, DINING AND ENTERTAINMENT have been made even more rewarding as Ayala Malls presents the Ayala Malls A Card—a privilege card where you can get access to exciting sales, promos, discounts and more. As the premiere dining, shopping and entertainment destination, Ayala Malls offers another reason why we truly Live'emall at the Ayala Malls. From Glorietta, Greenbelt, Alabang Town Center, Ayala Center Cebu, Market! Market!, to Bonifacio High Street and TriBeCa, Ayala Malls continues to offer its mall goers a beautiful and remarkable experience through world-class shopping and dining destinations geared towards today's discerning lifestyle coupled with unique services, events and activities only the Ayala Malls can bring. Ring in 2009 with cheer as Ayala Malls lays out the red carpet to every valued customer with its Ayala Malls A Card-your access to the ultimate malling experience in the Ayala Malls.

Over 1,000 participating establishments will give every valued customer a well-deserved shopping experience with discounted sales and freebies from every Ayala Mall! Ranging from apparel to accessories, fashion denizens are sure to bag fabulous finds from participating A Card retail outlets such as Debenhams, Cinderella, Folded & Hung, Crossings Department Store, Acme Jewelry, Tomato, Abenzons, Freeway, OMG, Cinderella, Rags, Bardiano, Genevieve Bonom, Kalmakolim, Lacoste Footwear, Jaspilin Shoes, Plains & Prints, the Hondtic, Gift Gate, Kids of Boys, Apple & Eve, Wonderly Gems and many more.

The tech-savvy will embrace every electronics and appliance store giving away great discounts from Nokia, Sony Ericsson, Nokia, Samsung, Canon Zone, Samsmasu, Games & Gadgets, Digital walker, Complink, P-Hub, The Electronics Boutique, and Power Mac Center. Meanwhile, design aficionados will find great bargains from Play & Display, Asian Finds,

SHOPPING has never been this rewarding. With the Ayala Malls A Card, get VIP treatment with exclusive shopping perks and privileges.

Camerawiz Lifestyle, Designer Wares and more.

Sports enthusiasts can find truly delightful deals from Nike Park, Converse, Adidas, Dave Sports, Planet Sports, JB Sports, The Athlete's Foot, Toby's Sports, Sneaker Inc., Surfworld and a whole lot more.

Choose from participating dining establishments in the Ayala Malls offering discounted rates and freebies such as Outback Steakhouse, Italy A Fork & Co., Italiani's, Big Buddha, Kitchen, Caliskin, Tony Roma's, Kahi Canvas/Pia Y Canvas, TGI Friday's, UCC Park Cafe, and Dodo's.

Treat your kids and friends to scrumptious sweets and desserts from Cupcakes by Sonja, Better Than Ice Cream Frozen Yogurt, Cold Rock, Gelatorie, Eurobake, Fruit Magic, Fusion Smoothie Café, Genuis Donuts, Sanchi Treats, and House of Polvoron.

Take your Ayala Malls A Card to the hippest restaurant bars and chill out with friends at Bed Space, dbarrth, Dildi's Grill & Bar Restaurant, Gilligan's Restaurant, Ice Vodka Bar, Sorry's Grill, Mark's Bar and Bistro, Knockville Bar & Restaurant and more.

Take your casual dining experience to a whole new level with Heaven'N' eggs, Lord Stow's Bakery, Chef d' Angelo, Food Channel, Max's Fried Chicken, Pizza Hut Bistro, North Park Noodles, President Tea House Express, Shakey's, Tugatinose, Sizzler Barbecue Restaurant, Lugaltinose, Tehyaki Boy, Wendy's, Yoshinoya, Tatara and Super Bowl of China.

Enjoy other Ayala Malls A Card perks with the unlimited use of the Cashmere Lounges in Glorietta, Alabang Town Center, Market! Market! and Trinoma. Furthermore, the Ayala Malls A Card provides exclusive invitations to movie block screenings, sale events, workshops and promotional activities. Even exclusive treatment on special occasions awaits Ayala Malls patrons such as reservation of seats for two to any Ayala Malls show on a first-come, first-served basis, guaranteeing comfortable seating for a truly worthwhile experience. Moreover, purchasing cinema tickets to just a breeze with the Express Lane in every Ayala Malls ticket booth fully provided for the Ayala Malls A

Fun events at the Ayala Malls

TREAT the little ones to fun-filled shows as they see their favorite characters live at the Ayala Malls. A Card holders get a chance to reserve seats on these exciting events.

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yala Malls

UNLIMITED access to Ayala Malls customer lounges awaits Ayala Malls A Cardholders.

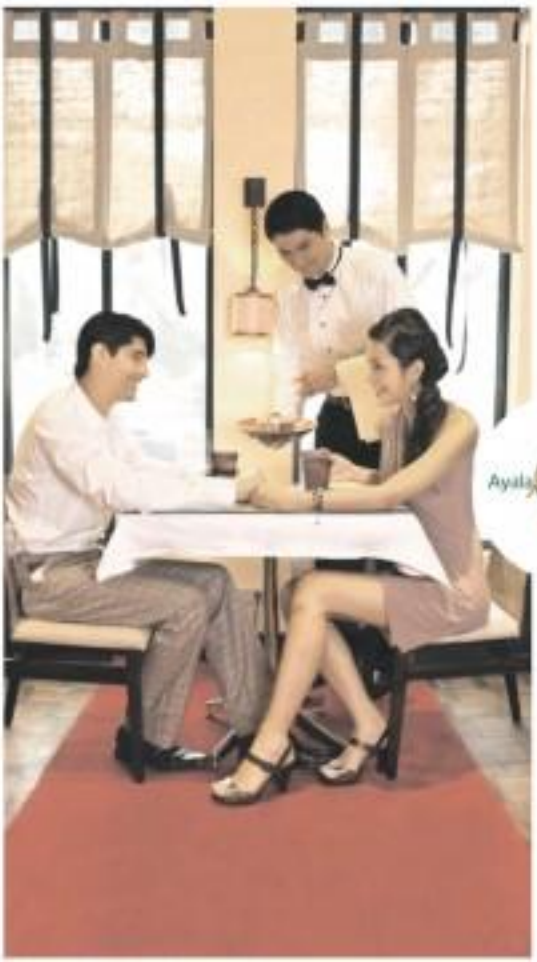
Card members. An Ayala Malls A Card cardholder can likewise avail of the free use of the E-Lounge in Glorietta for up to 30 minutes per day. For urgent business or personal matters, valued shoppers are offered free use of the telephone at any of the Ayala Malls A Card Booth or Concierge limited to a three - minute local call per day.

Utmost shopping convenience is now right at your fingertips with the Ayala Malls A Card. Get your own Ayala Malls A Card today.

Be one of the first to get the benefits of Ayala Malls A Card. Just drop by any of the Ayala Malls A Card application booths on the ground floor of Glorietta Activity Center, ground floor of Greenbelt 3 Concierge, upper ground floor of Alabang Town Center Activity Center, ground floor Concierge Market! Market! and ground floor of Trinoma Activity Center and present P10,000 worth of single or accumulated receipts from any Ayala Malls establishment and P500 processing fee and fully enjoy delightful perks only Ayala Malls could offer. Minimum age requirement is 12 years old. Receipts dated within six months from date of application will be accepted. Application period runs until Dec. 31.

Visit acard.ayalamalls.com.ph or text AYALA MALLS to 2948.

THE AYALA Malls A Card is your access to shopping, dining and entertainment privileges.



Enjoy perks that have that little extra bite.

With the new Ayala Malls A Card, expect nothing less than the red carpet treatment. Let to your heart's delight with dining freebies like dessert of the day, appetizers or drinks, then park during restaurants, it many shopping discounts, unlimited use of customer lounges and more.

To apply, go to any Ayala Malls Concierge or log on to www.acard.ayalamalls.com.ph
Text AYALA MALLS to 2948

I ♡ 'em all

'Satsang encounter' at Field of Faith Sanctuary

SOMETIMES WE NEED TO GET AWAY and try to find inner peace somewhere. Of late, the Field of Faith Sanctuary at the foot of the mountain in Barangay Lumot 2 in Cabuyao, Laguna has been the place to go to.

Owner Monsignor Rimbon Singson told us people are always searching for something.

I was there two years ago to attend the enthronement of Our Mother Divine Mercy, Queen of Atonement in the open chapel.

The place has spacious and comfortable retreat and conference facilities. Around the fields, are artistically rendered Stations of the Cross. It is an ideal venue for rest, reflection and restoration as one is surrounded by towering coconut trees and a rich of variety local flora, birds and insectflies.

To help people regain unity of mind, body and spirit, owners Monsignor Singson and daughter Carissa Singson Mallozzi are holding a "satsang encounter" on Feb. 21-22. Psychologist Jose Aragon will help

PURELY PERSONAL

Josephine Barcarse

reminders-enthusiasm in everyday life using the psychology of Carl Jung.

Singer Sayoni, an American married to a Filipina, is a Master in Gong Cha Center. He will teach qi gong exercises on how to work with the qi or life force through movement and breathing. Fr. Tito Caluag will do the "labyrinth walk" with participants to guide them to attain a higher level of awareness.

The individual sits in silent workshop for materials, overnight stay four buffet meals and three buffet snacks and use of all facilities is P3,500. A discount is given to a group reservation of four persons or more. Workshops will start at 9 a.m. Participants are asked to leave for Manila early.

Call 09179151505 or 7239081, email field_of_faith@yahoo.com; visit www.fieldoffaithsanctuary.com.

Isabela's Powervoice

In Baguio City an all-male concert chorus called Powervoice is preparing for a free concert on Feb. 3, 6 p.m., at the Isabela Provincial Theater. Powervoice is the only all-male choir in Region 2.

Composed of young professionals and students, Powervoice was formerly a parish-based choir of the St. Ferdinand Parish in Ilagan, then later, the St. Ferdinand College Concert Chorus.

The members are Christopher Hans, tenor I/lead; Allan-dela Peña, tenor I/lead; Alex Juan, tenor 1; Samuel Acoste Jr., tenor I/lead; Noel Duang, tenor I; Daniel Andre Estanislao, tenor 2/lead; John Lugo, baser I/lead; Glenn Lorano, baser I; Rey Lasonia, base I/guitarist; Jeremaie Marcelo, base 1/keyboardist; Alexander Dela Cruz, base 2/lead; Mike Joshua Tuana, base 2/lead; Melo Miranda, base 2; and Mervin Ballinga, base 2/percussion.

POWERVOICE members Hanie Mercado, Randolph D. Lagagay, Dominador Balbalosa, Francisco Acosta, Mark Robles, Christopher Juann Lugo and Christopher C. Hans. Seated: Jeremaie A/ Marcelo, Bijan P. de la Peña and Samuel C. Acosta Jr.

Powervoice is also holding a concert for a cause on Feb. 14, Valentine's Day, at the Friendship Hall of the "Bahay ng Kapatid" (House of Baguio) near the church. Text 0920.4377350 or 0910.4246605.

Carmel's banana chips

The Carmelite Nuns of the Holy Trinity in Lipa, Batangas are making banana chips to raise funds to build the Carmelite Monastery and Shrine of the Divine Mercy.

With the help of Lipa Mayor Linda Oscariz, the banana chips are selling fast at P50 per big bag. To order text 0928.371.2393 or email cabclipa@yahoo.com or call Adelaico Arms Hotel at 5116756.

'Ma Aling'

Josefina Reyes Abraham, widow of the late Pedro Abraham of Bayugan-ges, turns 95 on Feb. 4.

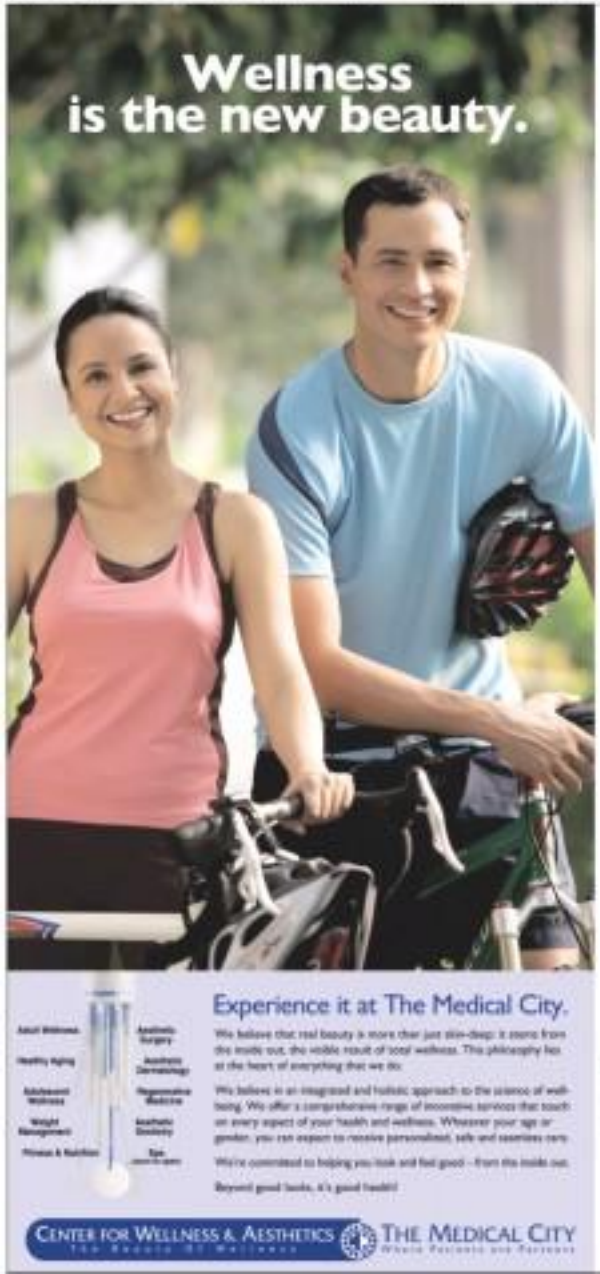
"Ma'aling," as she is affectionately called, is the first woman to line of St. Charbel, a Maronite monk, whose are featured in my column two years ago. Her husband, Pedro (no Bayuno), Abraham was the first cousin of St. Charbel so their mothers were sisters.

Arellano reunion

Arellano (Manila North) High School Alumni Association will hold its 64th alumni annual general reunion on Feb. 6 at the Makati de Magalla along Roxas Boulevard. Registration and cocktails will start at 5 p.m. Call 5722449.

Seminarians' fellowship

At least 500 theology students from 20 seminaries all over the Philippines are expected to gather at the University of Santo Tomas-Central Seminary on Feb. 7 for "Kapatirán," the general assembly of the Seminarians Network of the Philippines (Seminet). Visit www.seminet.ph.org.



BULGARI Diagono Professional Terra

Luxury watches go functional

BULGARI WATCHES ARE AN investment piece that can be passed on from generation to generation.

The Diagono Professional collection is based on graphic and aesthetic motifs symbolic of the Bulgari style. It addresses the need of people who use their watch as a high precision instrument.

The materials are of high quality; they are resistance-tested by the Controle Officiel Suisse des Chronometres, a Swiss company internationally recognized for certifying chronometer watches.

The exclusive use of mechanical movements with COSC certification guarantees the precision of each movement after severe tests conducted over the course of weeks at different temperatures and positions. These watches are guaranteed after-sales, water and air that serve different purposes but share the same qualities of excellence as Bulgari's.

Bulgari boutiques are at Greenbelt 4 and in 6750 Ayala Center.

DIAGONO Professional Terra

Sunday LIFESTYLE Travel

SHOWMANS Kapatid (left), a Chicago Pilipino youth group, entertains Boys visitors with Philippine folk dances. Above, Travel Channel's "Bizarre Foods" host Andrew Zimmern talks about his global culinary adventures in an SRO crowd.

North Americans lured to Philippine adventures

US Midwesterners take to the country's bird-watching spots, dive sites, nature trails, friendly people and great shopping

Text and photos by Cheche V. Moral

YES WE CAN.

The Department of Tourism's gang hit a tricky note in luring North American travelers at the height of a global financial crisis is quite evocative of the optimism and can-do spirit that permeated the American air at the dawning of the presidency of Barack Obama.

In spite of unseasonably cold subzero temperatures several days before Obama's inauguration, US Midwest travelers arrived in droves at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center in Chicago, Illinois, to attend the annual two-day Adventure and Travel Expo. The Philippines was the featured destination.

"If the attitude is to go for it, you can go for it," said Yolanda Morales, the tourism attaché in Chicago. The event had good attendance, in spite of the weather. "Numbers wise, it's not as much as the previous year, but the quality and interest are the same."

A conundrum, in fact, given that, according to Morales herself, Midwesterners—the "provincianos" of America—are leisure and comfort travelers first, namely the market for adventure travel.

"Adventure is only one," she said. "We're luring them know there's more."

Yolanda Morales has directly been reaching base with bird-watching clubs and other similar groups. Her task has also been to look for "nice person among whom Chef's second, respected and loved value believes in my country," as a link to these clubs.

There's the underwater photographer Lynn Funkhouser, who's been frequenting the Philippine dive sites in the last 30 years, and Lisa Goodell, co-founder of Chicago's Adventure Travelers Association.

Goodell, a Chicago local and consultant of the DOT office there, said, "Midwesterners are hard to do down to one thing. Chicago has a mountaineering club and it has the flattest place in the US... There are different clubs for everything."

Much to do

Goodell has visited—and has brought tourists—to places like Bohol and Palawan. "They love it!" she said of her companions. "Once they get there, they realize there's so much to do." In late January to the 02U, she likened the variety of activities in the Philippines as a "crazy family." "There's [one son, something for housemates, for the wealthy and for the budget travelers." She never failed to remind them to bring an empty suitcase "for all the goods and the shopping."

She added, "Palawan is a bit rough on the edges and I think that's okay. It's becoming too Cebu or Boracay-ish...then it's too paved over. People would feel like they're having an experience versus an adventure. An adventure turns up your world a little bit. There's the bumpy van ride..."

The new thrust of the DOT has also brought excitement to adventurers like Carlos Libonada Jr., a DOT consultant and former professor at the UP Asian Institute of Tourism. In the 1990s, while still working at the DOT, he was appointed project officer for ecotourism. At the time, the concept was new. "The country and the market weren't ready," he said in retrospect.

A few months ago, adventure travel was launched as the new pet project of Tourism Secretary Joseph "Joe" Durano.

"We should be doing more because there are so many products to develop," Libonada said. "Tourism has been elevated. It used to be [directed at] 'labwasho-hugas-yan'... Ecotourism also uplifts the morale of locals," he said, citing the 360-degree turn of poachers into one guides for dolphins and

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Re: OFI-NCR Permit No. 0337 Series of 2009.

North Americans lured to Philippine adventures

From page A1

whale shark watching.

Eagle-watching

He also noted that of the 600 species of birds in the country, 200 are endemic to the Philippines. "Did you know that you can actually find the Philippine eagle in the wild? It's not difficult to find," he said, citing Bukidnon as one of the provinces. "If you find a nest, it will be there for seven months."

Other adventure activities include white-water rafting, trekking, cave tubing, spelunking, skydiving, rock climbing, snorkeling.

Since luxury travel is out of the window, adventure tours may also be the way to go in this time, Velarde-Morales said. "[We're a] diverse country with many things to do. It may be costly [when asked], but for what you experience ..."

"The air tickets from here to the Philippines aren't the cheapest, but if you're looking for incredible experience, lots of vacations, there's something for everyone and great food," said Andrew Zimmern, chef and host of Travel Channel's "Bizarre Foods with Andrew Zimmern," who was one of the featured speakers at the AEE. He did an episode on the Philippines in his show three years ago. The country is one of his two-to-top holiday-destination recommendations to his friends. (*See story in* Inquirer Lifestyle, *Jan. 29 issue.*)

As an AEE breakfast meeting hosted by the DOT, Velarde-Morales also invited a small group of African-American travel agents, recognizing that "they're becoming a major force."

Ready

"Someone asked me if the Philippines is ready," Velarde-Morales noted. "Socially and sociologically, we can carefully acknowledge that we've become used to have tissues on our car, we have to evacuate [that, too. If we're serious about getting quality visitors, we'll go for them regardless of color."

At the meeting, she purposely invited only agents that have sold the Philippines as a destination in the past but have since refocused on other products, sure of reviving their interest in the country.

Wheelie Lu, vice president of Asia Pacific Travel Ltd., who, with president Walter Scott, has visited the Philippines at least six times, said American tourists are largely pleased with their experience here. "When they return to go back."

Continuity is some claims, tourists isn't as attention-grand. "Sure!" they look get toward. "Hopefully the rich still will have money [to travel]," Scott said.

"Because of the economic situation the travel industry is the first to suffer," noted Patricia Schultz, best-selling author of "1,000 Places to See Before You Die." Like Zimmern, she was featured speaker at the AEE. "It's considered frivolous and unessential, a once-in-a-lifetime but yet a hard-to-have. It's a shame because travel should remain a priority for children, a way to create memories of a lifetime. It's not like buying an extra pair of shoes or a fourth television [set]."

Schultz, who cites three Philippine places in her book—Banaue Rice Terraces, Taal Volcano and Boracay—said people must continue to travel. "You just need to be more cautious. Instead of three weeks, go for 10 days. There are other options, you just need to do your homework."

The research and all that will be part of the adventure.

7,100-ISLAND ADVENTURES. As featured destination at the recent Adventure in Travel Expo in Chicago, the country makes a bid for the roaming families of the US Midwest's most populated states: Illinois, Texas, Michigan, Ohio.

PATRICIA Schultz, author of the best-seller "1,000 Places to See Before You Die"

TOURISM consultants Carlos Libunao Jr. and Lisa Greyhill

THEY MAKE IT HAPPEN. The Philippine Tourism team in Chicago and Filipino volunteers with Tourism director Vernie Velarde-Morales and consul general Benita C. Cabrera (fifth and sixth from right), Nora Bautista of Team North America and Mitzi V. Ecarma, administrative officer of the Chicago tourism office

'BOYCE AVENUE LIVE AT THE SM SUPERMALLS

Popular Florida-based band Boyce Avenue is set to hit Manila & Cebu - for the first time in the Philippines, with their strong acoustic roots and harmony-driven rock sound. Fall in love with their soothing vocals and melodious sound through concert performances in SM Cebu, SM MOA, SM North Edsa and SM Megamall.

With over 3 million hits and counting on their videos and music, this Youtube sensation has become one of America's hottest bands today. Just last year, brothers Alejandro, Fabian and Daniel Manzano together with drummer Stephen Hallet released their very successful debut album entitled All You're Meant to Be. Since then, the boys from Boyce Avenue have been around the world touring and performing non-stop. With their simple yet hook-filled tunes like Hear Me Now, Dare to Believe, Find Me, and many more, Boyce Avenue has captured the hearts of music lovers everywhere as they sing their way to global stardom.

Celebrate love and music with Boyce Avenue on their very first performance in Manila! Watch them perform live on FEB 12, 6PM at the Atrium of the Northwing of SM Cebu, on FEB 13, 7PM at the Entertainment Mall, Seaside Boulevard, SM MOA, on FEB 14, 5PM at the Atrium at The Block, SM City North Edsa and FEB 15, 7:30PM at the Mega Atrium, SM Megamall. The concert performances are free so be sure not to miss this exciting night of acoustic and rock brought to you by the SM Supermalls! Many thanks to our media sponsors Wave 89.1, Magic 89.9, XFM 92.3 and MTV Philippines.

Fortune-telling, believe it or not, still sells

By Alan T. Vergara

KNOWING WHEN THE ECONOMIC crisis would end was the first time multi-goers' minds when they stopped into evening to Eastwood's City Walk. We were they dying to know Barack Obama's ultimate peace plan in the Middle East.

Between personal problems and unnerving world conflicts, the average Filipino would rather focus on the here and now, be it their fledgling businesses or falling love lives, or they tried to divine the future through one of 12 psychic readers in the mall's ongoing Psychic Festival.

The two-week celebration, which ends Feb. 8, heralds the "dawn of the Ox and includes cyclic verse painting and calligraphy exhibit by artist Arsenio Lim.

Dina (not her real name), for instance, wanted to know if red ribbon thumb bells would ring for her and her beau of seven years. The visit couldn't have come at a more crucial time, as her once hot love affair has turned frosty of late.

The initial prognosis was bad. Lim don't bother to leave text. (unless printed out), but Dina had her way in the end. As she gave her psychic reader the eye, the latter got the message and had to do a double take.

"I really wanted to walk out," Dina said, her voice still cracking from the initial piece of bad news. "I couldn't accept what the psychic told me. I said, uncan, more? He brought out his cards again and, after a few minutes of looking into them, told me there's still hope."

Obviously the psychic was able to read Dina's "character flaw." Unless the minds her jealous ways, the psychic said, she could kiss her dream of a white wedding goodbye.

Then there was the curious case of Joy who "just happened to pass by" here.

"I'm not really into these things," she said, as she waited with a dozen others for her turn. "But my husband in Asia is still in the office and I wanted to kill time when I saw this gathering of psychics."

Investment

For P500, a wide-eyed believer can pick a psychic of choice. Each session lasts 20-30 minutes. If that follow happens to be clueless, the friendly confines will do the dooming.

Indeed, instead of blowing hard-earned cash shopping, Joy decided it a wise investment to seek supposedly sound advice on her future.

"I'm planning to set up a business this year," she said. "I guess there's no harm in shopping around for advice."

He crystal balls and tea leaves here. Like your friendly neighborhood doctor, each psychic has his or her own unmistakably esoteric tools—from ordinary playing cards (minus the joker, of course) to more "exotic" tarot cards.

Some rely on reading your hands and palms, while the likes of Ada Victoria, a self-styled "love and soul" therapist decked in beads, bangles and a shimmery headband, resort to more dramatic measures such as "starlight vision," complete with a token rub-down of silver. Ada's "cleanser" any source of impurities on the seeker's hands.

If she responds this method, she could very well put up a spa with fortune-telling services. Not a bad idea, really, in an ever-tightening consumer market where sensing a niche is key to long-term survival.

Past lives

Victoria claims to be a reiki master and is also adept at reading each person's past lives. She, more than other psychics in the group, is perhaps the best person to tell you if you were a princess or a pauper (not again!) in your previous run.

Others, like "spiritual consultant" Leo apologize to the Weekend Guide Pericles and plain Jane medium Portia Alvira, are as motherly or as utterly frank as the occasion calls for.

Economic crisis? Mall-goers are asking the 'psychics' something else

PAGSAMO Portia's preferred tools of the trade include ordinary playing cards.

AMID tarot vibes, mallers troop to Eastwood City Walk's Psychic Festival.

IF IT'S Starlight Vision you want, reiki master Ada is the psychic to go to.

Apart from predictions, they offer nuggets of practical wisdom, from how to know, friendships or finances, allments to avoiders, which are somehow lost on the hapless and bombarded daily by the din of urban living.

Then there's the call, English-speaking Lez Magics, who, apart from climbing the ferner rating tarot cards, peddles a line or two of predictions for each month of the year on a yet-to-be-published, which he then hands out to each and every seeker.

The chances of you going abroad are highly likely, as are the possibilities of you finding the love, sought-after one, more. Don't bother asking any of them about tax-breakers. They'd be more than happy to volunteer such info to you.

Just don't ask them about winning lotto numbers or you'd come home disappointed. As said to the Middle East conflict would have been much easier to predict.

"I don't engage in promoting games of chance. Besides, if I could predict such things, do you think I'd still be here every night at this late hour?" said Ricardo with a wink.

MALONSO-TAN DIAMOND WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Julian Malonso y Mota and Rosario Tan y Ares recently celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary at Valle Verde VI Clubhouse.

The Mass was officiated by Monsignor Teodoro Bacani and concelebrated with Fr. Enrique Lafuente, SJ.

GONZALES-GUEVARRA

Danilo Gonzales Jr., son of Imelda and Leah Gonzales, wed recently Ms. Bernadette Guevarra, daughter of Ignacio and Veronica Guevarra, at St. Michael Archangel Parish Church in Wack Wack, Mandaluyong. Reception was held at Angel's Gabriel Garden in San Gabriel, Sta. Maria, Bulacan. Jojo Manalo designed the bride's gown.

LEONARDO-ANTONIO

Gerald Ignatius Leonardo, son of Marilito and Rosella Leonardo of Sydney Australia, wed Dr. Angela Adelaisio Antonio, daughter of Lawyer Juan and Dr. Teresita Antonio of Cauayan, Cagayan, on Dec. 29 at the Manila Cathedral.

Reception was held at the Magnolia Ballroom of Manila Hotel.

The couple resides in Sydney.

Milestones

We welcome announcements of weddings and engagements. Submit names of engaged couple, names of parents, date and place of wedding, and your daughter along with a photo of the couple and a sketch of the bridal gown, if any, to the Inquirer, P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1260 Makati City. E-mail to lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph. A photo of the bride and groom is required of the wedding duo already taken place. Announcements will be printed depending on space availability and at no cost to the senders.

Pilipinas Shell gives free fuel and 7 million instant prizes

Free fuel, lubricants and over 7 million instant prizes to be given away as Shell proudly reveals that 7 out of 10 motorists believe that Shell gives better mileage, as reported by the Global Consumer Tracker.

From February 1 to March 31, 2009, every Php 500 single or accumulated purchase at Shell entitles motorists to a peel-off card, wherein they can win instant prizes such as Select water, Nestle Pinipig ice cream, Kitkat, Pepsi and Mentos. Motorists may also win P700 worth of Shell fuels and lubricants by simply collecting 7 peel-off cards.

Winning is easy. Simply peel off the card cover/top sheet to reveal a corresponding product logo for the instant prizes. Or collect special peel-off cards with Shell Fuel Tipid Tips. Combine any six Fuel Tipid Tips peel-off cards with either a Shell or a Helix logo to win Php 700 worth of free fuel or lubricant products.

According to Stephanie Cua, Shell Fuels Manager, "Shell's latest promotion celebrates the outstanding results of the recent Global Consumer Tracker, which revealed that motorists believe that Shell fuels provide better mileage to their vehicles." The results of the Global Consumer Tracker are also timely given the conclusion of the Shell FuelSave Challenge, a two month-long test to see how much motorists could save using Shell's new Fuel Economy formula along-side Shell's Fuel Tipid tips. The top performers of the FuelSave Challenge showed that they could save an average of 24% on their monthly fuel consumption by using Shell Super Unleaded with the new Fuel Economy formula alongside Shell's Fuel Tipid tips.

Cua adds "We believe in motorists getting the most out of every drop when they use our fuels. Last year we were inspired by the results of the Global Consumer Tracker, which showed that 7 out of 10 motorists believe that Shell gives better mileage. Meanwhile, through the FuelSave Challenge, we wanted to show Filipino motorists that they can achieve a significant amount of savings with the right information, driving style and quality fuels. At Shell, we've built a legacy on improving our fuels by finding news ways and means to integrate fuel economy into our formula. The results of the Global Consumer Tracker and the Shell FuelSave Challenge signal that we're on the right track towards our vision of helping the world's motorists save up to 10% on their fuel consumption."

From February 1 to March 31, 2009, be one of the many who gas up at Shell and get the most out of every drop. Load up at your nearest Shell station and get the chance to win free fuel and prizes!

Among the many headlines

of meltdowns and uncertainties,

one "feel good" page

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ENTERTAINMENT

YOUNG actress Marianne Jordan in Brillante Mendoza's "Serbis". Pending beauty in the "dark, pending grandeur" of a decrepit theater.

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Good reviews for 'Serbis' in NY Times, LA Weekly

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

RP movie screens in US this week after getting little love in Cannes

BRILLANTE "DANTE" MENdoza's "Serbis" received scathing reviews when it had its world premiere in late 2005's Cannes International Film Festival, where it was the Philippines' entry in the main competition.

Darkly dismissed it as "mildly out of place" in the race, that it "crawls in about twice" and that its "slice-of-life realism often feels more exploitative than enlightening."

But as it opened in US theaters early this week, the movie elicited encouraging reviews from two major US publications, LA Weekly (Jan. 19) and The New York Times (Jan. 31).

As described by The Times, "Serbis" tells the story of a "fractured family that is trying not to disintegrate further inside the derelict walls" of a moviehouse that has become a front for male prostitution.

'Prolific auteur'

In the LA Weekly, writing about a mini-retrospective of three filmmakers films ("Foster Child," "Tirador" and "Serbis") at the University of California in Los Angeles, Nicolas Rapold described the filmmaker as a "prolific auteur [who] dives headlong into the sanguine fissure of poor, bustling [Filipino] families."

Rapold, who is also a critic for The New York Sun and The Village Voice, finds "Foster Child"—"elevating ... [elevating] a tragic day, which is not more ordinary and chattering." He points out that "Tirador" is "an extended handheld hustle, a Darwinian roundelay through standard hovels and uneven [land alleys]."

'Gentle, kandy'

In "Serbis," Rapold says, the camera "is very mobile." He adds that Mendoza, "shooting on fantasmic 35mm instead of his usual video, finds beauty in the dank, pooling grandeur [of a downpit the movie]... and the utterly displaced flesh of the family's frisky teenage contingent."

Manohla Dargis of The New York Times, giving "Serbis" a second look, s. a Darwinian roundelay through standard hovels and uneven [land alleys.")

'Gentle, kandy'

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Manohla Dargis of The New York Times, giving "Serbis" a second look,

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FEB. 12 - SM Megamall & SM North Edsa
Premiere Night:
FEB. 10 - SM Megamall
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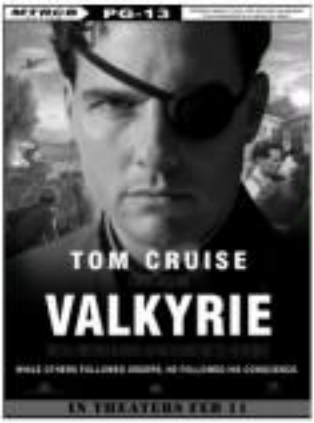
OPENS FEBRUARY 11



This week in show biz history

1964: Thousands of screaming fans greeted The Beatles as New York's JFK International Airport for their first US tour.

1981: Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman officially separated after 11 years of marriage.

1984: Justin Timberlake tapped Janet Jackson's top during the Super Bowl halftime show and exposed her breast.

AP

DID YOU KNOW...

Composer says TV foundation used his work

By Patricia Concepcion

JOMAR AGNOWETER: GARY Granada is crying foul over what he says is GMA Pagasa Foundation using [illegible] without his consent.

In an e-mail titled "Song Theme Unauthorized by GMA Kapuso Foundation-ang Aking Kompositon" which he sent to friends, colleagues, and the media, Granada attached a 24-second audio tape where he claimed his [illegible].

On the tape, Granada narrates that the foundation commissioned his services for the music of a commercial jingle.

He says the final version of the "study tape" he submitted was disapproved, and the job went to another composer.

GMA 7 aired a finished product of the finished commercial before the Christmas season. Granada claims the music bears a striking resemblance to the one he submitted.

On the audio tape, Granada plays the two versions side by side and points out what he believes are similarities in the basic structures.

In a phone interview on Friday, Granada told the business that the foundation offered him a "study fee" which he said he did not collect.

"That's not the point of the complaint," the composer insisted. "What I'm saying is that nobody could have come up with the music of that commercial without having used parts of my composition."

Good relationship

The irony, Granada said, is that he's a talent of GMA Records, music label of GMA Network, which produced and released an album of his two years ago.

He added that he's had a good working relationship so far with GMA7, having composed a jingle for one of its public service TV programs, "Bay Sosaw Tayo."

Granada said he has brought his complaint to the Filipino Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (Filscap), where he's a board member.

Asked for the foundation's side, also on Friday, Noni dela Paraiso, executive director, said he hadn't seen the e-mail.

But lawyer Dirk Pessi, network vice president for legal affairs, said in a statement to inquirer: "GMA Kapuso Foundation had nothing to do with the hiring of the composer [for the project in question]."

Filscap chair Sonny Tan said the matter is up for discussion in a forthcoming special board meeting.

With Marinel Cruz

SHANG CINEPLEX
BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA (3D)
AUSTRALIA PG-13
UNDERWORLD 3 R-13
INKHEART (3D)
YES MAN PG-13
Holy Mass Celebration at the Shang
Saturdays, 5pm
Sundays, 11am & 4pm
Shang's La Plaza
POWER PLANT CINEMA
YES MAN - PG13
BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA - SP
INKHEART - SP
UNDERWORLD 3: RISE OF THE LYCANS - R13
AUSTRALIA - PG13
Good . . .
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+8 OSCAR NOMINATIONS+
INCLUDING
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BEST ACTOR - SEAN PENN
BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR - JOSH BROLIN
MILK
OPENS FEBRUARY 4
+OSCAR NOMINEE+
BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS
PENELOPE CRUZ
+GOLDEN GLOBE WINNER+
BEST PICTURE - MUSICAL OR COMEDY
Vicky Cristina Barcelona
OPENS FEBRUARY 18
+5 OSCAR NOMINATIONS+
INCLUDING BEST PICTURE
AND BEST ACTRESS - KATE WINSLET
+GOLDEN GLOBE WINNER+
BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS
KATE WINSLET
The Reader
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February 2
Telebabad

SINE NOVELA presents

PAANO BA ANG MANGARAP?

February 16
Dramarama sa Hapon

CARLO J. CAPARAS's TOTOY BATO

February 23
Telebabad

My Dad Your Dad
February 8

Ever After You
February 16

Lalola
February 16

worldview
February 22

Wish I May
February 24

Jag's Quirky World
February 28

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GMA

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INSIDE

Sheena Easton, Rex Smith answer our Valentine questionnaire /14

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Make way for 'Jay' in RP

LOS ANGELES—WE'VE GLAD Chat director Damian Xavier E. Pontan's "total experience" weekend. He took a gamble by sending a newcomer off "top" to via postal mail from the Philippines. When he told us to set a mail that the newcomer was on his way, we wished him good luck.

Well, the emotion-combining of the screamer arrived at our LA home intact. We immediately watched the film that we've been very curious about because it is only the feature-length debut of Pontan and yet it won the Best Film award at last year's Gawad Urian Independent Film Festival, went on to compete in the Directors' section of the Venice Film Festival, garnered special awards at the Bangkok and Subsinas International Film Festivals, and is still circulating in the film circuit.

A little caveat—we are predisposed to like "Jay" because it has our close friend, Piolo Pascual, in a major role. But after watching it, we can honestly say that it's an impressive, confident work. Pontan has a charismatic star and a gift for eliciting realistic, finely layered performances from his cast. One of Pontan's biggest leaps is the performance of Bianca Gonzalez whose TV persona's gentle, seductive ways make her an interview natural. Pontan even uses them dangerous, symbolizing media's benevolent facade behind its ulterior motive-to do anything, everything to get high ratings.

A few days before "Jay" opens in the Philippines—on Wednesday, Feb. 4 at all SM Cinemas, to be exact—we interviewed Pontan via e-mail for an update about his first movie that landed him an interview with the BBC News, no less, in London. In the interview excerpts below, Pontan mentions of the pink chick scene in the movie kept on exploitation. To elaborate on it would be unfair for the many moviegoers out there would show up to experience a promising, fresh new voice in Philippine cinema.

Pontan requested that we mention that admission is free for all those named Jay (just present a valid ID). He responded, "This is our way of giving back to the many that brought us so many blessings."

Almost a year after you finished the film, what are your thoughts about it?

"Jay" was a miracle for all of us. We just had a reunion with some of the staff last Chinese New Year and we were all recalling our hardships and the trials we endured while shooting the film. What surprised us was our respect and belief in the kind of film that we were doing. We believe in its essence and the message of the film. May chaotic daw kc. We knew we were doing something we can be proud of.

What the film finally premiered at the CCP everyone involved in its making were all happy with the final product. That meant a lot to me. The best comment I received came from Cesc Martin who said immediately after the film showing, "Check. Real intyo naman-making ganun kaganda yung pelikula. Para lang just having negative ah."

"The scenes of Jimmy and Cesc were mostly improvisations. I just gave them the context of the scene. The result was natural acting and great support between the two.

I learned that a director must acknowledge that the film is greater than himself and for someone is co-directing the film with him. When our scenes that, it becomes a learning experience and miracles begin to happen on the set.

Some of the best moments in the film were "happy accidents." The now famous "pink chick" scene—which is the favorite scenes of the audiences in all the international film festivals that the film has been to—was an accident. After several takes, I still could not get the shot I wanted. On the eighth take, the accident happened. I kept rolling and incorporated the sad hate of the pink chick in our story.

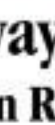
You've watched the film with festival audiences abroad, heard the audiences' questions and comments and read the reviews. What were the interesting insights you gained?

I have learned so much by attending international film festivals and watching the best of world cinema. Paolo Bertolin, one of the programmers of the Venice Film Festival, told me that he wanted me to watch as many films as possible because this was not a local competition anymore. That Venice was the stage where the best films of the world's auteur exhibited. I cannot help but feel humbled. Alarmed ya ginaw-ginaw dawald all-arise ro saem sochiset.

"Jay" may have won the Best Film award at Cinemalaya but about it was up against the best of world cinema at Venice. I cannot help but feel humbled. Alarmed ya ginaw-ginaw dawald all-arise ro saem sochiset.

I learned that the winners at these international festivals are films that offer a simple story with

RAMS V.



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Ahdeen V. Nepomuceno

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GALLERIA

1 UNDERWORLD 3	6 INKHEART
2 BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA	7 BUTAS
3 SAW V	[illegible]
4 AUSTRALIA	9 YES MAN
5 STATUS: SINGLE	10 LOVE ME AGAIN

ERMITA

1 AUSTRALIA

2 BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA	6 SAW V
3 UNDERWORLD 3	7 LOVE ME AGAIN
4 INKHEART	8 BUTAS
5 STATUS: SINGLE	9 BRIDE WARS / YES MAN

METRO EAST

1 SAW V	5 INKHEART
2 UNDERWORLD 3	6 AUSTRALIA
3 BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA	7 YES MAN
4 STATUS: SINGLE	8 LOVE ME AGAIN

NOVALICHES

1 AUSTRALIA	4 UNDERWORLD 3
2 BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA	5 SAW V
3 INKHEART	6 STATUS: SINGLE

PIONEER

1 BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA	3 UNDERWORLD 3
2 INKHEART	4 AUSTRALIA

Beverly Hills Chihuahua

NOW SHOWING at MOVIEWORLD

STA. ROSA

1 UNDERWORLD 3	4 BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA
2 AUSTRALIA	5 STATUS: SINGLE
3 SAW V	

LIPA

1 TRANSPORTER 3	3 BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA
2 STATUS: SINGLE	4 LOVE ME AGAIN

DASMARIÑAS

1 BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA	4 STATUS: SINGLE
2 UNDERWORLD 3	5 AUSTRALIA
3 SAW V	

IMUS

1 AUSTRALIA	3 UNDERWORLD 3
2 BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA	4 STATUS: SINGLE
	5 SAW V

ANGELES

1 UNDERWORLD 3	3 BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA
2 STATUS: SINGLE	4 AUSTRALIA

STAMMILLS

1 BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA	4 AUSTRALIA
2 LOVE ME AGAIN	5 UNDERWORLD 3
3 STATUS: SINGLE	6 SAW V

BACOLOD

1 INKHEART	5 STATUS: SINGLE
2 THE CURIOUS CASE of BENJAMIN BUTTON	6 BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA
3 BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA	7 TRANSPORTER 3
4 TRANSPORTER 3	8 INKHEART

ILOILO

1 AUSTRALIA	5 STATUS: SINGLE
2 BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA	6 INKHEART
3 STATUS: SINGLE	7 TRANSPORTER 3
4 INKHEART	8 BUTAS
5 TRANSPORTER 3	
6 BUTAS	

Make way for 'Jay' in RP

From page 1

a very powerful message told in a unique way. Fun seen up the streets of the jurors in festivals. If your film gets selected, then you assume that all the films in that festival offer that "unique voice." So the battle comes down to how that unique voice is told—does the film offer a unique storytelling experience?

Lav Diaz and Ennie Mendoza offer that unique viewing experience. I was very honored to be the one who brought the MindFly tapes of "Melancholia" to Venice. The film eventually won the Critics and Price Lav and Ennie are so popular in international film festivals that they are regarded as icons.

Which moments at these film festivals stand out in your mind?

First is our red carpet walk in Venice. Enzyo Staiola, who was supposed to document the event, went straight inside the Sala Grande, the main theater where the film will be shown. So I asked Enzyo and the festival organizers after the film showing if we can walk the red carpet again to be cute taps our walk. They all agreed. The funniest programmer laughed since we were re-creating a moment. He said, "This is very Jay" (cuteness).

The other unforgettable moment was at the Bangkok International Film Festival. I was the first one to be called to receive the Special Mention award. The princess of Thailand was at the back of the audience, I didn't know what to do. I stood up and went to the princess to receive the award. I was about to shake her hand because Thailand has strict protocol with regard to the royal family.

My favorite of the festivals is the one in London. I was the only Filipino on the festival. They were so interested in the film that I was interviewed by the BBC. I thought it was going to be a superb episode. It was broadcast live. My father was able to watch it abroad. A classmate texted me saying: "Where are you? Your film is being shown on BBC. We're watching it." I texted back: "I am now at the BBC getting ready for my interview" They were freaked out. I was so nervous during the interview.

Can you share some unbelievable anecdotes about your experiences directing famous?

Baron played a gay role/debut in "Indigo." He could see his father secluded him when he saw the film. He then told him never to play a gay role again. Baron was saddened. His father died and Baron had opportunities about playing gay again. But when he read the script, he immediately fell in love with the character. Somehow, Baron wanted to accept this role to prove to his father that he can play a gay role and still earn his respect.

We heard so many rumors about Baron's drinking problem but we never had a hard time with him during the shoot. He was professional and he even helped raise money for the film. That was how we worked for way with the film. No other actor could have played the part better.

Baron's most challenging moment was the frontal nudity scene. He was apprehensive about it at first but he eventually relented. He wanted a prosthetic so it was look bigger. The frontal nudity scene is tamed and allowed by the MTRCB, which gave the movie an R-13 rating.

"JAY" was last year's Best Film at the Cinemalaya Independent Film Festival.

Cesc Martin and Her Salonga were really good, too.

Cesc was a natural. He chose not to read the script. Instead, he improvised his lines. Proving sophistry long ago.

Her Salonga is an Iglesia ni Kristo member. She was so bothered by a scene where a Catholic priest applies ash on her forehead because it was Ash Wednesday. We tried very hard to convince her. She eventually agreed to put the ash, but not the act of applying the ash on her forehead. The evolution of the scene also saved us money.

What would you have done differently?

I will not change anything. Everything you see, the imperfections and some flaws, and even the discontinuities, are there for a reason.

What are your hopes about 'Jay' now that it's finally going to be seen by moviegoers in the Philippines?

I believe that the journey of making and showing the film here and abroad is already a priceless blessing for us. I hope the Filipino audience would enjoy and remember the film for a long time.

I also would like to thank all the institutions that helped earn 'Jay' was a reality. First, the Cinemalaya Independent Committee headed the script of 'Jay' with the Grand Prize. That gave me the confidence to enter it to Cinemalaya. Without Cinemalaya, there is no 'Jay.' I would like to thank Tonyboy Cojuangco, Lucsier Guillen, Robbie Tan and their staff, the CCP with Nestor Jacobo, Ed Calingasan and their staff, the NCCA which generously gave most entries P200,000 and the FDCP's Jacky Atienza, Christine Dayrit, Lali Soares, Digna Santiago and their staff.

One thing I cherish in joining the Cinemalaya is that I felt the support of all these institutions. Cinemalaya and the CCP did everything to support us. Robbie Tan even helped me find some-one to borrow money from so I could push through with my shooting in Pampanga. Lucsier helped in subtitling the film in her own house and gave me a big discount. Ed Calingasan continues to promote our films in festivals abroad. And the FDCP gave us money to go to Venice, gave us P500,000 more, and also gave the film a grade of "A," which exempts us from amusement taxes.

E-mail the columnist at rempulse_2005@yahoo.com and read his blog, "The Negative Report," at http://blogs.inquirer.com/negativereport.

CHOOSE YOUR Valentine SHOW

SHEENA Easton

NICK Swardson

EVERY YEAR, INQUIRER Entertainment helps readers pick the best show for that special date, by asking the concert artists what they have in store for audiences. This is Part 2 of the "Choose Your Valentine Shows" series.

Sheena Easton

"For Your Love Only"
Feb. 12
Resorts Casino
Call 911.5555

Where you're not doing a concert, how do you mark Valentine's?

Spending it with my family whom I love most in the world.

What's your most romantic Valentine's Day ever?

A helicopter ride over the Grand Canyon and a champagne picnic.

What's an ideal Valentine date?

Spending it with the person you love most in the world.

What's your fantasy date?

Nothing in Hawaii and riding a snow all the way to the beach where my Valentine waits for me with champagne and roast pig.

What's the most romantic love song?

"Wild is the Wind."

Rex Smith

"Let's Make A Memory"
Feb. 7, The Pavilion, Bacolod City; Feb. 12, Mitt Ballroom, Heritage Hotel, Pasay City; and Feb. 14, Cebu Int'l Convention Center, Cebu City
Call 891.9999

Where you're not doing a concert, how do you mark Valentine's?

If I am not doing a concert, I make a romantic dinner for two at my sailboat, deep inshore and anchor it there.

What's your most romantic Valentine's Day ever?

The most romantic Valentine was telling my date that I love her while we were drifting in a hot air balloon.

What's an ideal Valentine date?

The ideal Valentine date is with someone you really feel special about. Never spend Valentine with someone you don't really care about. Wait till next year. Or take your mother out to dinner.

What's your fantasy date?

Sailing to Hawaii and riding a wave all the way to the beach where my Valentine waits for me with champagne and roast pig.

What's the most romantic love song?

"Simply Irene," of course!

Why should we watch you?

It's the best evening you can give your Valentine. You will never forget it!

Rumblings in TV land

By the Entertainment staff

ACCORDING TO A MOLE, QTV is in the middle of a reinvention. The upscale women's channel of GMA 7 has reportedly scrapped some local shows.

The buzz is: QTV will be repackaged into an all-news channel like ABS-CBN's ANC.

Boss in hot water

Big Boss of a TV channel is said to be in hot water. Female Reporter allegedly slapped Bb, a former politico, with a sexual harassment suit.

Is this the reason that Bb is considering a cushy new job abroad?

Unreasonable host

A source insists that several Producers and Presenters are complaining that the demands of Controversial Host are becoming more and more unreasonable as he becomes more and more powerful.

The Pilth claim CH is asking for exorbitant amounts of moolah so that his show could be brought over to their net.

This is nothing new. CH previously had a tiff with his old show's staff over similarly questionable practices.

Confirmed nuke

Last Sunday on "The Buzz," Kris Aquino and Boy Abunda confirmed that their ABS-CBN morning show "Boy & Kris" would soon bid farewell.

Aquino hastened to add that it's a "promotion," not a cancellation, because they will be moving to a prime time slot.

As for the morning slot, there was talk that a new all-girl trio would take over, with Lorna Tolentino as main host.

At press time however, the latest word was that JJ had bagged all, Hada Gutierrez and Al si de los Alas will take the reins, and Boy and Kris will anchor a nightly infotainment program, "Showbiz News Pipsoy-CNN."

Note: the blanked business soap opera "Pretoria" will debut in February. And Dolphy and Mahiling Morales will team up in the late-merye "Ging," a Pinoy version of "Hoarding."

What they said

"I just saw it as a tremendous compliment that this moment when I was terrified of [on the] first day of shooting and when I have advanced so many years ... really, really liked me." - Viola Davis, who stars alongside Meryl Streep in "Doubt," on the latter's exclamation ("Somebody give [Viola Davis] a movie!") during last Monday's acceptance speech at the Screen Actors Guild Awards.

* * *

"I always wanted to be adopted."—George Clooney, joking on a panel with his fellow veteran journalist Nick Clooney, at the Newseum in Washington.

* * *

"You gotta meet my mom. She's a party ndgy chick!"—Jamie Timberlake, on his mother's approval of the infamous "Saturday Night Live" skit where he nibbled a piece of his mommy on a gift. AP

Happy birthdays!

Today: Don Everly of The Everly Brothers

KRIS and Boy: More to prime time "a promotion, not a cancellation."

ANNABELLE RAMA: Proud of her current exhibit, unlike the earlier [blurry].

b. 71, Lisa Marie Presley is 41. Trudy Styler is 61. Michael C. Hall is 38.

Tomorrow: Graham Nash is 67. Hannah Fawcett is 61. Chaka Khan is 55. Shakira is 32.

Feb. 3: Micky Dolenz is 66. Morgan Fairchild is 59. Nathan Lane is 53.

Feb. 4: Alice Cooper is 61. Natalie Imbruglia is 34.

Feb. 5: Charlotte Rampling is 63. Barbara Hershey is 61. Jennifer Jason Leigh is 47. Laura Linney is 45.

Feb. 6: Jim Jim Gaffney is 92. Rip Torn is 78. Marsha Van Dusen is 78. Natalie Cole is 59. Rick Astley is 43.

Feb. 7: Jimmy Spader is 40. Garth Brooks is 47. Chris Rock is 44. Jason Gedrick is 42. Ashton Kutcher is 31. AP

* * *

Top of the tabloids

The top show-biz stories to land tabloids this week. (And why we are excited if we are excited.)

Pigil in trouble!

•Willie Revillame spurs Joy Viloria Quinsaloso? (Process?)

•Dolphy pinagngangarahan si Willie. (Tungkol kay Dibiasa?)

•Willie hinahawing ng prinsipe ng Dubai. (Sobil-spree niyolay librasa?)

Feast for the senses

•Rufa Mae Quinto naghahanap ng kainuman ni bank aroun. (Yikes!)

•El Trinidad di na matitiiman si Kristine Hermosa. (Hindi nga?)

•Angelica Panganiban at Derek Ramsay grabe magkasakitan. (Love is broblem...)

•Bibingyan ni Angel Locsin si Derek ng home. (Awww, di pa nya bayabasan?)

Being Bebe

•Ruffa Gutierrez hindi "pinasalan." (Ouchyu ate.)

•Carmina Villaroel sakanap sakit kay Hayden? (Pareng hindi naman.)

•Ruben Gutierrez di sinasharot si Bebe Gunigundo. (Dinggan mo siya, Mr Ho?)

•Papa Jonathan pag-uga magdag tsismoso ni Bebe. (Gawd-me!)

Words of the week

•Pinoy! ako ay labay ng mga talents ko ngayon, hindi katulad ng mga dumalagan ko noon na mga jodapoh!—Annabel Rama. (Hmm, ano kaya ang mga iyon?)

•Pakwang di na magpaumanhing tingin. (As in wedgie, or ...?)

•Sabagong Angel Locsin-Luis Manzano-chismis ng tagapagsilbi? (Parang "Bahoon Dingoon"?)

•Pilda ulong OOM. Angel (E di ... wala!)

•Angel kasing-sasabi kay Luis Hindi ngayon?

•Kasyelle Christian Bautista bata-tatlyer-on-bay Jennifer Bautista. (D'ba sabi ni Bebe, mga apo?)

Look and see

•Dennis Trillo naghahanap ng ka-date sa Valentine's Day (Wish this were it!...)

•John Prats pakakasalan si Shaina Magdayao. (What's the date?)

•Marvin Agustin hindi nanalingan sa salad! (Sino ibad-mulanasan pulot?)

•Si Rhian Ramos ang pinaka si Sam Milby kay Anne Curtis? (Ehem! see ya again.)

•Alex Gonzaga at Pelo Rivadeo dinidiskuan sa ng "Gagamitan." (Okey lang.)

•Hayz Jimenez on ng bagong boyfriend. (Wait and see ... till the next project.)

•Annabelle Rama nagtampo kay Eheat Kramgoletta. (Sobil-tawan ng boyfriend?)

•Annalyn Abrasaldo nanay ng madrasa pa. (Sis, madrasa din ajan?)

Bandera, Sunday
E-mail at: mabandera@gmail.com.ph

PG-13

Owen Wilson Jennifer Aniston
Marley & Me
OPENS FEB. 4

WINNER A VERY SPECIAL LOVE STORY!
OPENS FEBRUARY 4
EXPERIENCE THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY STORY OF THE YEAR
A GIFT FOR MOVEGOERS.
WILL SMITH

R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND UP.
OPENS FEBRUARY 4
EVIL WILL BREAK YOUR HEART THIS VALENTINE
THE #1 HORROR MOVIE IN AMERICA!
MY BLOODY VALENTINE

LINDSAY Price, Brooke Shields, Kim Raver

'Lipstick Jungle' season finale

HALLMARK CHANNEL KICKS THE SEASON one finale of "Lipstick Jungle" on Feb. 19 at 10 p.m. The "chicktastic" (sure) on the best-selling book by Candace Bushnell, tells the story of three of New York's most powerful women at the height of their careers.

In the final episode, Wendy (Brooke Shields) encounters and deals with a difficult acquisition, Charles (Christopher Cousins) has a heart attack and gives Nico (Kim Raver) a cruel reality check and Victory (Lindsay Price) accepts that Joe (Andrew McCarthy) is now her boss and not her boyfriend.

CLICK!

Premieres

Premiering on Hallmark this month are: "Doc Martin" season one, Feb. 7, 22, 28, 10-5 p.m.; "Starter Wife" (mini series) marathon, Feb. 14, 4 p.m. onwards; and "Rain Shadow," Feb. 21, 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.

"Saving Lives," about a famous cancer specialist, also premieres on Feb. 7 at 9 p.m. The film follows the true story of Dr. Daniel Edwards, who finds challenge in 40-year-old Sherry Collins, the patient with the worst episode he has ever seen.